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A Very Little Cross

Use me big or use me small, I said,
All the while believing it would be
Some ostensible, important place –
An elevated niche. But then instead,
He beckoned me away from dignity
To serve where men might see His face
And never mine.

Lord, raise some dais in the throng
Where fury crosses crowded ways –
There build Your theater of hope
Where many ears may hear my song.
I'll teach ten-thousand tongues to praise
And add to meaning greater scope.
Oh, use me splendidly!

It's strange I now hang by my hands
In crucifixion. Reason fails . . .
He gave me utter anonymity.
None see my sacrifice! The stands
Are empty now. These ugly nails
Were driven in obscurity –
A tragedy unseen.

I don't mind the dying, Lord,
But here, apart? Without impact?
No, please . . . give me a public stake
Much jeered and hooted, hatred stored
In some arena, scoffer packed . . .
Still You ordained that we must take
Our calvaries together, if apart.

Calvin Miller

News

The newspaper cross: a Good Friday litany

Confession:

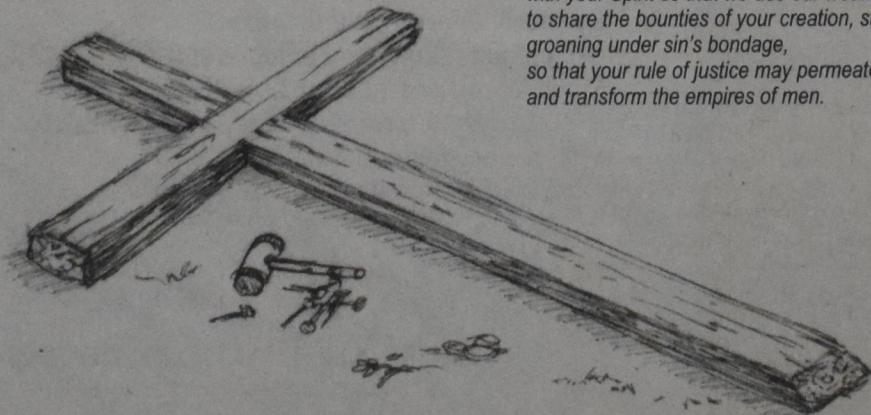
The Lord our God founded the world by his wisdom, and his spirit of wisdom and understanding was poured out on Jesus Christ, that he might judge the needy with justice; yes, he brings justice for the poor and oppressed. In him the peoples of the world are gathered together; in him there is no more Jew or Gentile, Hebrew or Greek, rich or poor, black or white, male or female. In him God reconciled the world to himself, binding all things together under his headship. He came to bring peace on earth by the shedding of his blood.

The newspapers:

But the newspaper headlines tell a different story. The poorest nations of the earth are growing poorer, and although they cry out for justice and for a share of creation's good things, they more than any other are plagued with leaders who are corrupt and who plunder rather than serve. Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ivory Coast, the Congo, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Sudan – across Africa there's a trail of blood connecting refugee camps and mass graves. Governments rise and fall, warlords rape, pillage and kill, and as families flee and scratch a living from the earth they are weakened by malaria and killed by AIDS. And we who have brought the good news to the continent turn the page to study the latest electronic gadgets and compare prices.

Prayer:

O Lord, listen to the cries arising from the blood-stained earth. The people are turning to you for comfort and for help, and you are not answering their pleas for justice and mercy. You have promised us justice, reconciliation and peace but the misery, the hatred and the slaughter continue unabated. If you have indeed vanquished the devil and his minions, why are they still wreaking such havoc in the earth?

**Confession:**

The Lord anointed his Christ to proclaim freedom for the captives, to break the chains of injustice. He paid the ransom, buying our freedom with his blood. Because he died as the new Adam, the new representative of the human race, we are no longer slaves, but we are sons and daughter of the most high, gifted with his Spirit, the Spirit of liberty. In him we have redemption and are loosed from the bondage of sin. It no longer holds us in its thrall, for in Christ we are new creatures living in a new creation.

The newspapers:

But the newspaper headlines tell a different story. Across the globe true believers continue to seek the succour of false gods – Allah, Buddha, Brahma or Vishnu, money, power, history, nature, science, democracy, passion. Clerics, academics and politicians combine to keep the people enslaved to them and to lives of subjection to gods who are not gracious, merciful redeemers, but who subject their followers to endless tyranny. They persecute the church and kill God's people. The gods of nationalism and self-determination continue to claim their sacrifices – just as national socialism and communism once did. But other gods are more subtle. The gods of money and wealth chain many to daily drudgery from which they flee periodically to seek freedom on the road, in the woods and hills, on the mountains. The quest for freedom, diversion, entertainment in turn enslaves millions in the West. Others seek escape in alcohol, drugs, sex, shopping, sports, endless activity. Everywhere people speak of freedom but seek bondage.

Prayer:

Lord, Redeemer, Liberator, carry through, we pray, on your mission to free the peoples and the nations with the good news that you do not use your power to suppress us or impose impossible tasks upon us, but that you came from heaven to earth to set us free from the powers and principalities of this world. Free us from bondage to our own interests, our own comfort, our own security that we may be free to serve you and one another. Empower us with your Spirit so that we use our wealth and power to share the bounties of your creation, still groaning under sin's bondage, so that your rule of justice may permeate and transform the empires of men.

Confession:

The Word who was with God from the beginning is the true light that gives light to every person and every nation. He came into the world so that all men may have light and life. The Word became flesh, lived with us, and by his Spirit continues to live with us and in us. In him, we are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God. He has called us out of the darkness to walk in his marvelous light – to the praise and glory of him who wraps himself in light and scattered his light across the heavens.

The newspapers:

But the newspaper headlines tell a different story. The world seems to be emptying of light; the darkness threatens to overwhelm us. Faith in the Lord and Giver of light is declared to be a primitive superstition, a source of violence and repression. Europe, which once raised up great cathedrals as showplaces for the God of glorious light, has excluded any mention of him from its constitution, for God is an embarrassment, a foreign remnant to the legislators of the new order. The new world order proclaimed by America derives its light more from humanist visions of democracy and the free market than from the light of the Gospel. The great universities of the world have silenced the Word of God and extinguished his light. The politicians seek to banish any mention of God from the public square. Writers and journalists fill the void with noise, for they no longer believe in truths of any kind. The world is heating up but the sun is dying.

Prayer:

Send forth your light and your truth, O Lord, and lead us to your holy mountain, to the place where you dwell. Lead us to the hill of Golgotha and the cross, where he who came as the light bore our darkness, turning it into light. We pray for your light but we also fear it, for we whom you called the children of light are almost indistinguishable from the children of darkness. There is little light that goes out from us. Forgive us, make us new, rekindle our faith. Pour out in us, we pray, the life and the light of Christ, your Son, who died that we might live, who suffered the anguish of God-abandonment that the darkness might be lifted from us. Irradiate us with the joy of his resurrection so that we may shine in the darkness like galaxies of stars in the night sky.

News

Canadian Anglicans temporarily quarantined by Anglican leaders



Thirty-five Primates of the Anglican Communion at Armagh Cathedral

Harry der Nederlanden

The leaders or primates of the Anglican Communion, meeting Feb. 21-25 to decide the future of the worldwide fellowship after gathering reactions to a report on how to deal with same-sex unions, agreed to temporarily quarantine the U.S. and Canadian churches. They were asked to "voluntarily withdraw" from the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC), the main coordinating body of the communion, for at least three years. In three years the Lambeth Conference, which gathers Anglican bishops from around the world, will meet again. It meets

every ten years.

After the Episcopal Church USA and the New Westminster diocese of the Anglican Church of Canada ignored an agreement that had been reached in 2003, conservatives and leaders from the developing world put strong pressure on the primates to take action or risk schism. The U.S. church consecrated the openly gay Gene Robinson as bishop of New Hampshire, and the bishop of New Westminster introduced a rite of blessing for same-sex unions.

Last year a committee appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, issued the Windsor Report. Among other things, it

affirmed the traditional stance of the church on same-sex unions and said the North Americans had not acted in accordance with the principles of the Anglican communion when they acted on their own. Although the Report fell short of actually calling on these churches to repent, it did ask them to express regret for precipitating division. The report did not address the homosexual issue directly. It took as its assignment only the issue of how to preserve the unity of the worldwide fellowship despite the divergence of

understanding on this important issue.

Leaders hoped that the temporary isolation of the two groupings in question would appease the more evangelical Southern churches and avoid an outright split. The depth of the disagreement was demonstrated by the refusal of some of the primates to participate in the eucharist with Bishop Frank T. Griswold of the U.S., who supported the election of a practicing homosexual as bishop. The Africans stood firm on their belief that unity of doctrine precedes unity of worship.

In an earlier communication, the primates of the global South stated that the actions of the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church of Canada "represent a departure from genuine, apostolic Christian faith." And they suggested that the way toward "repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation enjoined on us by Christ" is to move beyond informal expressions of regret to a genuine change of heart and mind.

Primates issue communique

A communique issued by the 35 (of 38) primates at the end of the meeting acknowledged that the North American bodies proceeded "entirely in accordance with their constitutional processes and requirements." Nevertheless, it said that many of the primates were "deeply alarmed" by the divergence from the standards on human sexuality that had been agreed to as biblical teaching at the 1998 Lambeth Conference. (Three of the primates – from Burundi, Hong Kong and North India – did not attend.)



Archbishop Robin Eames greets the Primates of the Anglican Communion and government officials in the cathedral of St Patrick

The communique affirmed once again the findings of the Windsor Report, referring especially to those sections that "speak of the central place Anglicans accord to the authority of scripture, and of 'autonomy-in-communion' as the balanced exercise of the inter-dependence between the thirty-eight Provinces and their legitimate provincial autonomy." In other words, it reminded the various provinces that, although they are autonomous, they owe it to the rest of the communion to consult with them on serious issues if they wish to preserve their unity.

To that end, the primates urged all churches to impose a moratorium on the ordination of practicing homosexuals and the blessing of same-sex unions. Conservatives point out that the statement stops short of insisting that such actions no longer take place and does not threaten any sanctions.

The communique is realistic, however, about the prospects that the North Americans will reverse their actions: "Whilst there remains a very real question about whether the North American churches are willing to accept the same teaching on matters of sexual morality as is generally accepted elsewhere in the Communion, the underlying

reality of our communion in God the Holy Trinity is obscured, and the effectiveness of our common mission severely hindered."

After asking those churches to temporarily withdraw from the governing body, it also asked that a special meeting be scheduled this year at which the two bodies are given "an opportunity to set out the thinking behind the recent actions of their Provinces."

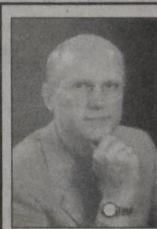
Conservative primates were cautioned not to meddle in the affairs of other provinces. Some conservative dioceses in the U.S. have sought to put themselves under the oversight of African Archbishops. A group of 11 Anglican churches in Canada – eight in B.C. and three in Saskatchewan – have withdrawn from the oversight of the Canadian primate and affiliated with the church in Rwanda.

"The authority of the Bible is at stake"

According to Patrick Good enough of CNSNews.com, "Some orthodox Anglicans are not hopeful that they [the primates] will go far enough to stem a liberal trend they say has already done severe damage to the church."

Before the release of the com-

See Anglicans p. 4...



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News

Anglicans continued from p. 3



The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Revd Rowan Williams, preaching at Evensong

munique, Archbishop Peter Jensen of Sydney, Australia, told British radio that although a schism would be sad and painful, "there do come times when the authority of the Bible is at stake, and this is one of those times, where to stay together becomes a great difficulty."

One conservative leader, Mark D. Thompson, the academic dean of Moore Theological College in Australia, said that the primates had the authority to take what he considered the necessary action — declare the actions of the U.S. and Canadian churches unbiblical, and call on them to repent. Such repentance, he added, could only be demonstrated by the removal of Robinson from office and the removal of the same-sex "marriage" rites in Canada.

Most Anglican leaders, however, say that the primates have no direct power to discipline the autonomous national churches.

Bishop Robert Duncan of Pittsburgh, leader of the Anglican Communion Network, said, "Individual provinces do have the freedom to act as they see fit under their various constitutions, but the exercise of that freedom beyond agreed teaching and practice will imperil their standing and participation in the [Anglican] Communion."

"The issue is not over"

The primate of the Canadian Anglican Church, Archbishop Andrew Hutchison said the withdrawal is "part of a pain that needs to be endured" and that it prevented what could have been a "precipitous split." He had feared it was going to be much worse, as some of the primates were calling for an expulsion of the Canadian and American bodies. But while a split may have been averted, "the issue is not over," conceded Hutchison. "It doesn't lay to rest the issue of homosexuality." [*Anglican Journal*]

Griswold, leader of the U.S. church, endorsed the communiqué, saying that he would return home to consult with the leaders of the Episcopal Church on the recommendations of the statement and the Windsor Report. Bishop Michael Ingham of the New Westminster diocese stressed that the Anglican Church of Canada remains "an integral part" of the worldwide Anglican Communion and a member of the consultative council and pointed to the part of the communiqué that stated he had acted legally in deciding to bless same-sex unions.

Cedric Pulford of ENI reported that the British-based Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement welcomed the results of the primates' meeting because it approached the homosexual issue as "a process involving further discussion." A few days earlier, however, he had reported that the organization challenged the authority of the primates to decide matters for the Anglican Communion. The meeting "is not the executive arm of Anglicanism," they said.

The temporary exclusion of the North Americans, he said, was seen as a victory for the traditionalists. The British *Daily Telegraph* called the Anglican leaders' final communiqué "a mild but clear rebuke for the liberals."

Christianity Today described the outcome of the meeting as "a classically Anglican search for the cherished 'Via Media' — the middle way."

Who leads?

Michael Valpy of the *Globe and Mail* began his story on the primates' meeting by describing intense lobbying efforts by "wealthy conservative U.S. Anglicans," who armed sympathetic prelates with cellphones. The wealthy U.S. church, however, is by and large not the primary defender of tradition in the Anglican Communion but the churches in the developing world, which now have more members and are growing more rapidly.

Pulford wondered what would happen to the communion's finances in view of the fact that the US wing is the largest contributor to its central services and to the provinces in the global South. ECUSA contributes \$600,000 US to the Anglican Communion office and Canada about \$105,000.

According to *Christianity Today*, Archbishop Henry Orombi of Uganda said Bible-centered Anglicans in the United States should take heart from the communiqué because it creates a mechanism to ensure orthodox Americans remained unmolested in their worship and beliefs by the American church's liberal hierarchy.

He added: "We have moral obligation to those with whom we are in fellowship together. We will not abandon them, as we are answerable for them before God."

Palestinians recoiling from suicide bombs

Joshua Mitnick

RAMALLAH, WEST BANK — When news spread that a suicide bomber killed five Israelis in a Tel Aviv nightclub at the end of February, members of the Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade sought refuge.

Fearing reprisal from Israel, the Palestinian militants huddled inside a grungy dorm room near what used to be Yasser Arafat's bunker. But they weren't there to cheer the attack. Instead, they frowned on the blast that shattered the Israeli-Palestinian truce declared last month.

"We are not with this operation. The timing is wrong," said an Aqsa member wearing black-and-white Fila sneakers who called himself Abu Yazan. "We are now talking about a period of [truce]. The rules state that we do not attack."

The comment was a rare jab at a suicide bomber — especially coming from a fellow militant — and it reflects a growing consensus among Palestinians that the attack had damaged the standing of newly elected President Mahmoud Abbas, as well as the livelihoods of Palestinians.

Indeed, after years of celebrating suicide attackers as heroes, Palestinians are souring on suicide-bombings; many of them ask whether strikes at Israel will hasten their goal of establishing an independent state. It's a shift many link to the election of Mr. Abbas — a vocal critic of the militarization of the Palestinian uprising — as well as the emerging détente with Israel.

Amid Israeli outrage and international affront in the wake of the attack, Abbas called the perpetrators *mukharebin*, Arabic for saboteurs, and a term which observers said has never before been applied to suicide bombers.

At a Palestinian conference in London, Abbas said that all Palestinians condemned the Tel Aviv attack, and he pledged to improve the Palestinian Authority's security services, a step deemed critical to reining in militants.

Israeli officials aren't convinced. "We were disappointed there was no mention of the need to dismantle terror organizations," an aide to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon told reporters.

Even Islamic Jihad tried to avoid claiming responsibility before a bomber's farewell video emerged to establish a link.

Just as telling was the reaction in Deir el Ghusun, the West Bank hometown of Abdallah Badran. The young bomber's portrait was not included in the "martyrdom" posters which have become a standard memorial format. And instead of a traditional bittersweet celebration, the bomber's family greeted the news with remorse.

Questions about the effectiveness of this kind of attack have grown in the past few years, observers say. Riad Malki, the head of Panorama, a Palestinian nongovernmental organization promoting democratization, says Abbas's January election as the successor of Yasser Arafat helped crystallize that shift in opinion.

"Abbas has made it clear that these attacks are not conducive for realizing Palestinian rights," he says. "People feel that after so many years of intifada, there's an opening for peace. The moment that people start connecting these attacks to their national interests, and their livelihoods, that is an indication that the shift is genuine."

To be sure, few militants are disavowing suicide attacks completely. Hani Masri, a Palestinian political analyst, says that withdrawal of support for bombings among Islamic militants is a tactical change rather than a deep-rooted belief. He cautions that the Palestinian uprising will not rid itself of the suicide culture until the Islamic militants disavow it also.

And yet, on the streets of central Ramallah, unusually open criticism of the Tel Aviv bombing could be heard. Subheil Thannous, a jewelry retailer, says Palestinians are ready to make a break with the past. "People want to forget about these attacks. Enough," he says. "Now we want to change."

Joshua Mitnick is a correspondent of The Christian Science Monitor.

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Letters

Ethics and values in public affairs in the service of peace, order and good government in Canada

Gerald Vandezande

Ever since my family came to Canada from the Netherlands in 1951, I have been vitally interested in learning more about our unique country. In a Sarnia library, I found a copy of *Speaking of Canada*, a 1959 volume of speeches by the Right Honourable Vincent Massey, our first native-born Governor-General. I was particularly taken by his address on November 5, 1953, to "The Montreal Council on Christian Social Order." Massey's powerful Gospel call to love and social justice motivated me then, and motivates me now, to keep exploring what makes us be who we are, and what we can do for our nation's good.

However, not everyone will agree with the various social justice causes that I have advocated and fought for over the years, such as equality under the law based on equal justice for all, for both heterosexual and homosexual relationships, fair public funding for all schools, including bona fide alternative and independent schools, and the elimination of homelessness and child and family poverty, have had strong and committed opponents.

With great respect, I have tried to convince these opponents to follow their own hearts, and the values they profess, in responsible social action. I view mutual respect as a way to justice, linking people and communities through bonds of equity. Remember, justice is not spelled "Just Us." I view mutual responsibility as a tie that binds, linking people and communities through deeds of compassion and solidarity. Remember, the consistent expression of mutuality makes for conscientious citizenship.

In the promotion and practice of ethics and values in public affairs, we must deal fairly with people's diverse religious commitments, ideologies, perspectives, principles, and practices. We invariably encounter different, even opposing assessments of established and emerging ways of life. Nevertheless, ongoing debate and advocacy regarding different goals and objectives, requiring clear and integrated policies and accountable societal structures, are essential to a free, responsible democratic society. The debate must remain civil, respectful, and based on real human needs. The advocacy, involving both human rights and human responsibilities, should always be as meaningful as it has been for me for these many years.

It is a genuine pleasure and privilege to participate in the thoughtful development and passionate promotion of pro-active public policies and people-friendly programs that reflect basic beliefs and core values. Such life-affirming beliefs and community-building values should shape the economic, environmental and social well-being of our beautiful country. Mediating consensus among the various communities and peoples that constitute the Canadian mosaic is a fascinating activity. We are different from each other. It is in education, discussion and

mutual accommodation that we find our true selves and neighbors, our imperfect yet exemplary nationality.

Especially today, we urgently need visionary leadership. We must develop a new generation of principled, clear-minded successors to continue our work tomorrow. We must continue to challenge Parliament and the provincial legislatures to deal equitably and imaginatively with changing policy priorities. These include:

(1) Ensuring public justice for diverse economic and social relationships, often involving a renewed understanding of Canada's Constitution and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms;

(2) Balancing growing government budgets, without exempting from their responsibilities those most able to pay their fair share;

(3) Promoting international peace and justice; especially helping to stop the cruel conflicts in the Middle East and Africa, and by clarifying our country's ongoing and complex relationship with the United States. For example, on the basis of our true national values and international commitments, I strongly believe that Canada should continue to oppose the latest incarnation of the American ballistic missile defense system.

(4) Above all, we should be finding effective ways to diminish terrorism as an instrument of policy, whether by religious factions or nations.

I am deeply concerned that the living principles of public justice, legal equality, economic equity, and the Charter's fundamental freedoms and human rights be consistently honored by a united nation whose Parliament is obliged "to make laws for the peace, order and good government of Canada." It is imperative that we, citizens and politicians alike, do our utmost to practice at home what we advocate abroad.

As His Excellency John Ralston Saul warned in a provocative article "Canada's Gangrene" (*Maclean's*, 2-28-2005), "Extreme levels of poverty and the lack of affordable housing and services eat away at our society. It is a form of gangrene. We cannot have a democracy which accepts the exclusion of its own citizens. The true reflection of ourselves, of our society, is the one among us who has the least."

Mr. Saul pointedly quotes Nelson Mandela's recent plea to leaders and citizens: "Massive poverty and obscene inequality are such terrible scourges of our times that they have to rank alongside slavery and apartheid as social evils. And overcoming is not just a gesture of charity. It is an act of justice."

In our pluralistic, multi-faith society, it is essential to do what various educational enterprises such as the Arthur Kroeger College for Public Affairs at Carleton University already does: play a leading role in preparing Canada's next generation of leaders and decision-makers and identify innovation, initiative, and integrity in public service with the

aim of improving the quality of our country's public life. The Ottawa College's goal is one we all should share: to make "Canadians more informed, their governing institutions more effective, and their country (and our world) a better place to live."

May we all be given the commitment, faith, values, vision and resources, so that we, together, will work and stand on guard for our "Canada, glorious, strong and free" – a Canada built on inclusive, public justice for all people, in the selfless service of the common, public good of all, without dis-

crimination of any kind, anywhere!

And may our Parliament increasingly become a House where political persuasion, rooted in principled debate and mutual respect, daily contribute to "the peace, order and good government of Canada" and thus become a beacon of light in the world.

May God's love, peace, justice and people's practice of community become more evident everywhere!

Gerald Vandezande, C.M.
262 Pitfield Road, Scarborough ON M1S 1Y7
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folk dances and wear colorful costumes, but they are not interested in the values, beliefs and traditions of new Canadians unless they conform to the latest fashions of Liberalism. All races, colors and creeds are welcome in Liberal Canada as long as they check their faith and conscience at the door."

William L. Vander Beek,
Langley, B.C.

Re: Multiculturalism

Stephen Harper is not one to make us roar with laughter, but his understated humor does often make us chuckle. In his speech in the House of commons on what the government calls "civil marriage" (Wed. Feb 16), he stated, "I believe the Liberal vision of multiculturalism is really just a folkloristic one. The Liberals invite Canadians from cultural communities to perform

Re: One-sided views

I would really appreciate it if you would widen the scope of opinion on the U.S. invasion (devastation) of Iraq as well as the U.S. involvement in world politics. We know Mr. Bolt's and Mr. Antonides' views. I find them so one-sided and totally unacceptable that I find it necessary to urge you to enlist well-informed Christian authors with political science credentials.

Please don't use Mr. Hielema's articles as an answer to my request.

I admire the *Banner* editor's courage for publishing Mr. Skillen's views on these issues.

I have learned to expect intelligent Christian journalism/opinion from the C.C., qualities that I miss in the articles of Mr. Bolt and Mr. Antonides.

Henk Timmerman

Along with you, I have the highest regard for the opinions of James Skillen of the Center for Public Justice and would jump at the chance to publish such analysis. That's why I'm delighted at having David Koyzis as a columnist.

I'm not sure that political science credentials are any sort of guarantee of balance, lack of bias, insight or vision, however. And I don't believe the intelligence of Bolt, Antonides or Hielema is in doubt.

You want another viewpoint represented. And I don't blame you. So do I.

But all those political science profs are busy teaching and writing articles for one another that the rest of us don't understand. That's how they get tenure. Writing for C.C. doesn't count for much on that level.

And they sure don't do it for the money. It's a labor of love.

Harry

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Review

Million Dollar Baby: a meditation on wounds

Harry der Nederlanden

Competition, battle, blows, pain, wounds, blood – these are very primitive, primal things. Despite our veneer of civilized behavior, we never escape the circle from which those words take meaning.

Some have called *Million Dollar Baby* a rather superficial film, hardly deserving the recognition it got at the Oscars. But it is more – considerably more – than a film about boxing. It is also a meditation on some of these primal things.

Million Dollar Baby adds to the body of films in which Clint Eastwood, who both directs and acts in this film, reflects with some intensity and depth on wounds and on how those wounds can infect our entire lives and the lives of those around us.

In Eastwood's last western, *Unforgiven*, a scarred prostitute hires a farmer, a former gunman who returns to that past only reluctantly. A single wound sets the whole process in motion – driven by primal needs, whether for justice or for the means of subsistence or for respect from others. So this 1992 film explored the status that the capacity for violence gives a person – a way to overcome some sort of handicap or wound. The young man who joins the trio of bounty hunters, for example, is trying to compensate for his extremely poor eyesight by aspiring to be another Billy the Kid.

In *Mystic River* (2003), directed by Eastwood, an incident of childhood abuse, a wound that never healed, spreads an infection and leads to tragedy and murder – a dark undercurrent in an otherwise ordinary American neighborhood. Not just the boy who was abducted suffers from this wound or trauma, but his boyhood friends and his wife as well.

The "cut man"

In all these films, wounds assume a metaphorical weight suggesting larger themes relating to a metaphysical brokenness, to guilt, the need for forgiveness and to the polluting, contagious effect of particular acts of violence. The wounds never remain just the wounds of this or that person: they bleed into the entire society depicted in the film.

Million Dollar Baby brings together three wounded people in a violent setting – the world of boxing, which, like the world at



large, delivers blows and wounds outside the ring as well as in. It is as much a meditation on the wounded body as was Gibson's *The Passion*, although it isn't nearly as bloody. Whereas in Gibson's film it is God who receives the wounds, in this one it is – perhaps – God who delivers the blows.

Fittingly, the main character, Frankie (played by Eastwood), is a former "cut man." A cut man works on a boxer between rounds, closing any cuts the boxer receives so that the referee won't stop the fight because the boxer is bleeding too much. He "heals" the boxer so that he can go on fighting.

At one time Frankie was one of the best cut men in the business, but now he is a lean, grizzled has-been who owns a seedy gym, the Hit Pit, where would-be boxers dreaming of glory come to train for the big fight. One of the regulars in the gym is a skinny, mentally slow kid who couldn't throw a punch to save his life. But he too dreams of getting a shot at the championship. The distance between dream and reality is so vast in his case, that he seems almost pitiful. Almost.

Frankie's partner/caretaker in the gym is a washed-up boxer called Scrap (played by Morgan Freeman). Scrap is short for Scrap Iron, his former boxing name, but now it suggest "scraps" in the sense of left-over pieces. Scrap lives in a small back room of the gym as a combination caretaker and helper to Frankie, who has been training fighters. In fact, as the story begins, Frankie loses the fighter who has become a genuine contender he has spent a couple of years training to another manager and Frankie is back to square one.

The one-eyed counselor

The story is more or less told from Scrap's point of view; it is

his voice that provides a perspective on events. We learn from him, for example, that Frankie has been holding back his able young boxer from a shot at the title bout, arguing that he's not ready yet, because he's afraid he might get hurt. Scrap is much more than an employee. In some ways he knows Frankie better than Frankie knows himself.

He tells us that Frankie blames himself for the fact that Scrap lost the sight in one eye. Years ago he had worked Scrap's corner and had let the fight go on too long so that Scrap had been badly injured. So the two men are bound together by that single wound. However, Scrap doesn't blame Frankie; instead, he plays the role of a gruff but gentle counselor, prodding his friend to take the necessary risks so life can go on in a world where taking risks is necessary.

This interaction between two old and ageing friends, we sense, has been going on for a long time. They have ended up on the margins, lean, battered, scarred, but with their friendship and integrity intact. They may be walking wounded but together they've eked out this small space – their tacky little gym – where dreams of championship are kept alive.

The impudent woman

Into this space happens another wounded person – Maggie, a young woman who has long been nursing a dream of getting a shot at the top, or at least doing something to build up her own self-respect. Maggie (played by Hilary Swank) is a 31-year-old waitress, born to a "welfare mother" who long ago scared off the father Maggie loved. "White trash," she calls herself. She wants Frankie to teach her how to box, but he recoils at the thought of training "girly." Maggie, nevertheless, shows up at the

gym every day, working hard to build up her skills. First Scrap is won by her determination, giving her a pointer here and there, and at last and very reluctantly Frankie takes on her training.

The film takes its time to build up the relationship among the three wounded losers so that even though we are aware that this is a formulaic boxing story, we can't help but be won over.

Another dimension is added to the story by Frankie's Catholicism. He goes to mass every day and afterward teases the priest with questions about the Trinity or about the Immaculate Conception. The exasperated priest knows Frankie isn't really seeking an answer to his unanswerable questions and responds to Frankie's challenges with his own. He sees that Frankie comes to church because he's hurt and angry with God. And he tells Frankie to write his daughter. Why they have become estranged, we never learn. Although Frankie doesn't admit this to the priest, we do learn that he has been writing his daughter for years, but the letters have been returned unopened. He has a whole shoebox full of returned letters.

Substitutions

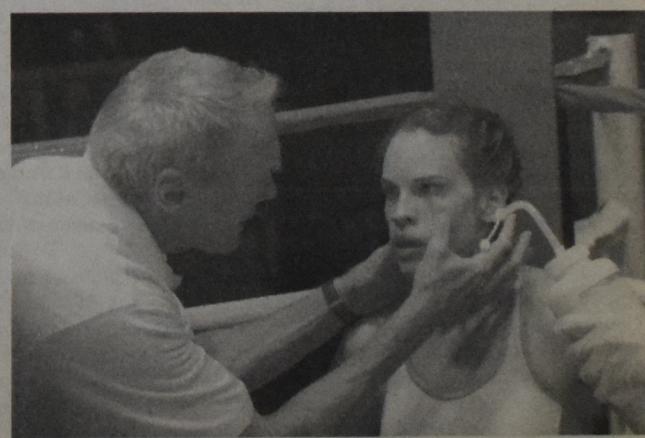
This explains something of Frankie's reluctance to take on Maggie, and it also adds another equally formulaic level of unsentimental sentimentality to the film. Maggie, of course, takes the place of the estranged daughter and Frankie takes the place of Maggie's long-lost father. These may be clichéd substitutions and exchanges, but they work because the film brings out the primal nature of these relationships. In many ways, the plot follows that of a stereotypical boxing movie,

but it never focuses on the hype and the glory. It keeps it simple and basic, focusing on very fundamental human exchanges, exchanges by means of which we deal with the wounds life gives us. This is a film about the fundamentals of a religious economy, for at the heart of religion there are these substitutions and exchanges, which are, if not stereotypical, then archetypal.

Eastwood often exploits and explores stereotypical plots to mine them for richer stuff, and that is what he does in *Million Dollar Baby*. On the level of the three-way friendship and the formulaic boxing story, we cannot help but cheer Frankie and Maggie on in their quest for the championship. At the same time, there's enough foreshadowing in the film to warn us not to expect a typical happy ending. In fact, at another level, we don't really want this movie to lapse into such a cheap Hollywood ending because we know life isn't like that, and because this movie has a certain honesty and simplicity we want it to be faithful to that. So we watch the plot unfold with divided hearts, cheering and fearing.

Those Christians who condemn the film for its ending are demanding a certain didacticism from this film that would only weaken it. It is not a film that ends with an answer. It is a film that asks dark, deep probing questions of us – and of God. God can handle the questions. Can we?

Or is the question posed by the movie a lot like those posed by Frankie to his priest – a substitute for a cry that issues from a deep wound that needs someone else to articulate the question, someone who knows the true depth and pain of our wounds?



Culture

Multiculturalism: the road to nowhere (II)

Harry Antonides

*If Canada, as an historical, social, legal and cultural concept, does not demand respect for itself and its ideals, why should any respect be expected? (Neil Bissoondath, *Selling Illusions*, p. 144)*

Multiculturalism has become the new shibboleth of Canada's self-image. We are assured that Canada has managed to build a showcase of multicultural harmony for the rest of the world to admire and imitate.

Here is John Ibbitson of the *Globe and Mail* (February 6, 2004), gushing about the Aga Khan Foundation's interest in establishing a global centre for pluralism in Ottawa: "...[G]overnments around the world increasingly look to Canada as the world's most successful pluralist state. We have found a way, despite many strains, of accommodating the founding French and English cultures, and have welcomed succeeding waves of European, Asian, Hispanic and African immigrants. Unlike the rest of the world, the more polyglot Canada gets, the more politically and culturally stable it becomes."

The emperor without clothes

Neil Bissoondath, Trinidad-born, of East Indian descent, Canadian playwright and novelist, will have none of this high-flowing self-congratulation. His *Selling Illusions: The Cult of Multiculturalism in Canada* is a thoughtful but blunt reminder that, as he puts it, the emperor of multiculturalism has no clothes. He has made himself few friends among the movers and shakers in this country.

Bissoondath encountered not just criticism but vilification. He found that his East Indian and immigrant background gave him no immunity against the charge of being a bigot and racist. To question multiculturalism is to question what he calls "a holy cow." But he is unrepentant and has plunged into the thick of the controversy that many do not want to touch.

His skill as a novelist is evident in the sensitive way he describes his own roots and the challenges faced by those who leave their homeland to start a new life for themselves in a strange country. But Bissoondath has little time for those who insist on retaining their loyalty to the country left behind

rather than making Canada their true home.

He believes that a country that embraces citizens who would treat it "as they would a public washroom – that is, merely as a place to run to in an emergency – accepts for itself a severe internal weakening. It is perhaps inevitable that for many newcomers Canada is merely a job. It is desperately sad, though, when after many years their children continue to see Canada as only that; and it is even sadder when their children continue to see Canada with the eyes of foreigners."

Bissoondath has little good to say about the celebration of ethnic diversity that amounts to no more than sentimental celebration of ethnic stereotypes. He argues that multiculturalism that wants to hang on to the ancestral homeland, with its insistence that "There is more important than Here," serves to encourage the ghettoizing of the different ethnic communities.

This divided loyalty, if such it can be called, has led some born in this country to return to take up arms on the side of the Croatians during the war in Kosovo. The other side of that coin is that old feuds in the homeland have been introduced into Canada – sometimes with deadly results.

The advocates of multiculturalism do not honestly face up to the fact that many ethnic communities and races harbor deadly animosities within themselves. They refuse to face up to that ugly truth because it would expose a fatal flaw in their grand design of nation building.

Bissoondath devotes a chapter to showing that the elevation of diversity to public policy is empty without setting out some limits. But where to draw those limits when some immigrant communities (at least their spokespeople) argue that female circumcision is part of their culture? Or what about the demand to adjust criminal law enforcement in the case of wife or child abuse in certain communities; or the demand for exclusive black schools; or sharia law for Muslims?

Ethical chaos

The author writes that we do not know how to answer these questions "because we have so blithely accepted the mentality of division, we find ourselves lost in a confusion of values. Multiculturalism has made us fearful of defining

acceptable boundaries. And so we find ourselves in danger of accepting, in its name, a slide into ethical chaos."

Ironically, multiculturalism has been exploited to feed the sense of alienation in many ethnic communities – inevitably coupled to, what else, the notion of victimhood. We now must be careful to avoid giving any offence to minorities, especially visible ones. This kind of anti-discrimination fetish has flourished especially in the academy and among the literati. Entire books and plays that do not meet the new standards of race and gender sensitivity have been declared to be unacceptable.

A vicious fight has been going on against writers who, like Bissoondath, want simply to write honest stories. The new racist and sexist vigilantes now insist that only blacks can write about blacks, women about women, Africans about Africans, aborigines about aborigines. And so on.

Many university professors, especially in the social sciences, have found the hard way that there is a price to be paid for disobeying the new politically correct dictates. The lives of some of them have been made miserable and in some cases impossible, because they did not faithfully adhere to the new orthodoxy. Zealots insist that male professors should not teach novels by women writers, or that a white professor may not organize an exhibit about Africa. Here is a case in point, one of many that could be cited.

University of Toronto anthropology professor Jeanne Cannizzo some years ago was driven from her job after she curated an exhibition called "Into the Heart of Africa" at the Royal Ontario Museum. Some black groups denounced her as racist and picketed the ROM. Her critics wrote graffiti on her house, and according to Robert Fulford, "invaded her classroom, shouted her down, and threatened physical harm. She withdrew from teaching and fell silent."

Where were the university leadership, her colleagues, the "human rights" champions, and for that matter the police, standing up for academic freedom, even the basic freedom from criminal attacks?

Bissoondath responded to an essay by Susan Crean who attempted to justify professor Cannizzo's attackers. He wrote that there is more in this than a hint of conde-

scension of the guilt-ridden intellectual "hastening to prove herself more sensitive to racial issues than people of color, more ethnic than the ethnics. The [Crean] article in the end, reveals the confusion often found in white left-liberal circles: not the exercise of intellect but the abdication of it, not exploration of ideas but conversation in a confessional."

The vaunted tolerance has made way for hateful intolerance, and Bissoondath has had his share of the slings and arrows for his breach of the new orthodoxy. But he is unbowed. He says: "Any attempt to padlock the mind is a question of fundamental liberty. Any limitation of subject matter or point of view, ... represents for us all a severe restriction on the free play of the imagination."

You need not agree with everything in this book to find this a refreshing change from the double-speak that appears to be endemic to the subject of multiculturalism. The bitter irony, which Bissoondath has the temerity to point out, is that the much-hyped multiculturalism in our country does not deliver what it promises. It does so in two ways.

First, multiculturalism fails in that instead of fostering national cohesion, it promotes division and alienation.

Second, perhaps worst of all, it serves to undermine the historic institutions and mores, with its roots in the biblical worldview, that have made this a country where freedom and civility have thrived.

The road toward a more healthy and vigorous nationhood begins with an acknowledgement of the truth about multiculturalism. That road will be difficult and treacherous. But *Selling Illusions* is full of suggestions to make a start at least with the first steps on that road.

Mosaic Madness

Sociologist and professor at the University of Lethbridge, Reginald Bibby has joined the discussion about Canada's dilemma in attempting to be all things to all people. His study of life in Canada published in 1990 bears the revealing title *Mosaic Madness*.

He is of the opinion that multiculturalism is really a form of relativism that puts a common basis for nation building out of reach. He writes that we want to be so open-minded (pluralistic)

that we are not very loyal to anything except to a rather "tenuous willingness to coexist."

The problem, says Bibby, is that in this country pluralism means that if someone dares to advocate a position on the basis of an ethical, moral, or religious principle – for example, on premarital sex, marriage structure, or homosexuality – such a person is typically considered narrow-minded – if not a threat to the public well-being, I might add.

Bibby thinks that religion, which after all is concerned with what is true, should help us find a way of living together within one nation. But relativism means that truth is understood to mean something that is true for one person may not be true for another. And this is exactly the tar pit of moderation that lands us into what Bibby calls a "visionless existence."

He describes religion in Canada as not very aggressive nor is it expected to be very demanding. Most Canadians have no strong convictions about religion, which at best has only a marginal place in their lives.

The result is that when religious groups speak out about public issues, whether Roman Catholic, United, Anglican, or conservative Protestants, their statements, according to Bibby "hardly sound prophetic. Usually they reflect the educational and ideological backgrounds of the people who have prepared them."

Bibby's study of religion and its impact on society in Canada has caused him to believe that religion in Canada lacks authority and has therefore lost the ability to make a contribution to the creation of social cohesion. He concludes: "Sadly, religion, rather than denouncing the excesses of individualism and relativism, has tended to embrace them. It therefore has lost both its message and its vocal chords."

Conclusion

Both books help us to see what needs to be confronted if we are to make headway in dealing with the very serious challenges we face in Canada.

Selling Illusions is intense, bold, detailed with some helpful suggestions. Bissoondath takes on the advocates of multiculturalism right on their home turf – and has the scars to prove it.

See *Multiculturalism* p. 8...

Church



James C. Dekker

Psalm 19 exultingly reminds us: "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands." In one of God's blessed whimsies, a quiet setting next to a Michigan lake under those heavens helped frame a far-reaching conversation about Christian Reformed Church leadership.

Birth of a project

A couple of summers ago, Rev. Duane Kelderman sat on the deck of the family cottage, mulling over informal discussions about pastoral leadership and congregational life and strife. Brimming with anecdotes of church hopes, both realized and frustrated, the talks also rehearsed stories of sad pastoral crashes-and-burns, as well as of flourishing and faithful congregations. Kelderman's lakeside deckchair became a staging area for the raw materials for a CRC leadership project.

Multiculturalism cont. from p. 7

Mosaic Madness is more scholarly, detached, careful not to upset the applecart. In the end, Bibby does not go much beyond some well-meaning admonitions to keep on striving to do better. He concludes that there is still much hope that "madness can yet give way to sanity."

I am not so sure, unless there is a far more radical and honest reconsideration of the road now taken in this country. One thing is certain: Christians who want to take their confession seriously need to do their homework much more effectively than we are now doing. The two books mentioned here, though quite different in tone, provide compelling proof of the urgency of that assignment.

Harry Antonides

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The character of a near disaster

Linking four leadership traits into a foursquare spiritual foundation, "Character, Conviction, Competence and Convergence," Kelderman presented them to a group of seven CRCNA pastors and lay members who have dedicated their lives to building churches and organizations to proclaim the work of God's hands.

Over the next months this "Leadership Development Team of the CRC," who perhaps never thought they were construction workers, shaped and hammered those buzzwords into a modest paper called *Leadership: A Working Definition*. CRCNA's Ministry Council endorsed this paper in July, 2004 as a helpful resource for developing CRC leaders. It is available from Sustaining Pastoral Excellence: pastoralexcellence@crcna.org

Blueprints or bomb craters?

For years I have poked around my own church-life tool boxes, scrap piles, finished projects and smoldering ruins, as well as those of unnamed and (mostly) surviving colleagues. In this and future articles, I will, like a building-, or in some cases a fire-inspector, reconstruct plausible congregational settings. One by one, I'll look at how those four leadership traits, or their absence, affect church-building or remodeling sites and histories.

Though none of these scenes is exactly identifiable, enough planks, walls, windows, or sometimes wreckage, are so common that certain people might suspect I raided your confidential trophy case or pain-filled junkyard. Don't think you're so special! God has given many servants the years, wounds, failures, forgivenesses, recoveries and faith to have worked *there*, bent that nail badly or fitted this board just right, until we finally learned that the Lord builds the church or we all work in vain. So, no names are used to protect the guilty because no one's innocent. Meanwhile, we can learn from our mistakes so well that we repeat them faster the next time, as my wife's cousin says. Or better, we might learn to let God establish the work of our hands in building his church.

Definition

The *Leadership Paper* defines "character" as that which generates

trust on the part of followers. Three dimensions are: moral excellence, the totality of life experience that form leaders and emotional intelligence (Leadership, pp. 1, 12, 13). As you read, ask yourself, "How does that definition of character affect the following building project and my own work?"

Foundations

Hopeful CRC, located in a prosperous mid-sized city, was born from a large mother church with Dutch immigrant roots. Many of its new and grafted branches from outside the ethnic group were looking for a new place to grow after two morning services were stuffed. Several individuals and families with little or no organized spiritual life started attending the new church after charter members rented a building from a shrinking congregation, whose members were eager for help to pay the bills.

The young congregation of second generation professionals and business owners introduced new worship songs, developed fresh liturgies and encouraged lay participation in worship, ministry and governance. Its first pastor retired after seven years, the first of which were enjoyable, though the last several showed frustration and stagnation. Members fatuously dreamed, "When we get our own building and a new pastor, we'll draw 20 new families." Hopeful Church called a ten-year missionary as pastor. Six years showed steady growth, even after six families left to a traditionalist denomination.

Frameworks

Council approved the organization of a long-range planning committee, initiated by two men, not then in Council, but with proven experience in business and local government. Operating at arms-length from Council, they assembled a committee of members ages 18 to 70, pastor included. They started talking about Hopeful's current ministries and how big a building to plan.

Twice-monthly meetings ate up almost a year, but with no plans for future ministry or building. The meetings gradually deteriorated into two-hours of largely cordial, but aimless rambling, occasionally with unnamed, but noisy flare-ups. They banged between some members' likes and dislikes about

worship songs or instruments to others' passionate reactions that "we have to keep up with culture."

The fire

After about a year, the by-now uncertain and anxious co-leaders were finding it ever harder to speak to each other even about commonplaces, not to mention tense church-planning. Many unidentified but deeply felt issues seethed beneath surface cordiality. Meetings became tense; attendance shrank, with members making excuses about busyness. Some took a private step back, suggesting to the pastor that he try to break the deadlock by confronting the co-leaders about lack of movement, flagging participation and frustration. He did, and little bits of hell under the glory of God's heavens soon broke loose. Hopefulness turned to anger, members' defections and congregational desperation almost proved fatal to the pastor's vocation and the congregation's future.

Four months later the pastor took a three-month medical leave, occasioned by exhaustion and depression. He sufficiently recovered to pastor the church for eight more fruitful months, even welcoming several new families and baptizing three adults and eight children. Then he accepted a call to one of several congregations that had been knocking for the past few years. Other casualties took years to heal. One co-leader quit the committee and transferred to the mother congregation. Three Council members resigned. The other co-leader was not elected to Council for seven years. Hopeful lost some 50 members before it started growing again.

The inspection

It's easy to list superficial reasons why Hopeful Church suffered a near disaster. For example: craving a building without community analysis and ministry planning; allowing gifted, but untrained, unofficial leaders to run too long without giving substantial feedback to an attentive Council, and more.

But many congregations have for almost 2000 years surmounted such administrative mistakes. What was really at root?

Our *Leadership Paper* helps us discern shared failure of character as the spiritual core of the damage

ing church-fire. Go through the check-list:

Moral excellence: Not an issue. Happily, no scandalous sparks fed this church fire. All the leaders' marriages survived, and eventually thrived, beyond the two-years of smoldering, outbreak and merciful extinguishing. God works in mysterious ways our blunders to reform.

Totality of life experience: Well, maybe an issue. Some big boys were playing with matches; they should have been more careful. For his part, the missionary-pastor figured what worked among non- or new-Christians would work too among prosperous North Americans. Sometimes it did; sometimes it didn't. For their part, the congregation put too much hope in the pastor as a magic pill for growth. But those errors only added fuel to a fire that had smoldered long.

Instead, let's check out **emotional intelligence:** One mark of emotional intelligence is persistence in the face of trouble. It was remarkable that Council, pastor and committee leaders soldiered on for almost two years in the face of anxiety and conflict. But maybe that was not so much persistence as the sheer mulishness afflicting our particular gene pool.

The truth of broken trust is more painful: during and after the meetings, all leaders involved – Council, pastor and committee co-leaders – failed repeatedly "to manage their own and others' emotions, to reach out for support in healthy ways" (p. 13). Talk buzzed among friends and cronies on all sides, but it was often accusatory, blame-seeking and guilt-giving. Everyone practiced secrecy and deceit instead of transparency and candor. No one dared go outside the congregation for advice or even prayer. While over years God graciously brought individual healing to most involved, don't we wonder what *might* have been?

But I'll leave that unanswerable question unanswered. Instead in the next article I'll look at the same congregation in later years and see how leadership *Conviction* played a decisive role in the years-long process of spiritual and physical re-construction.

Author James C. Dekker, pastor of Covenant CRC in St. Catharines, Ontario, has, in God's mysterious ways, wondered and wandered often through his share of blessings and blunders.

Church

UN aide says world failing southern Sudan, churches lament let-down

Fredrick Nzwili

Nairobi (ENI) – The warning by UN aid chief, Jan Egeland, that the world is committing an historic mistake by failing to support peace in southern Sudan is underlined by the feeling of abandonment churches and peace groups are experiencing due to sluggish responses to aid pledges.

"People are returning to southern Sudan. There are huge needs, but the world is not sending support," the Rev. Anthony Bangoye, the general secretary of the Nairobi based Sudan Catholic Bishops' Regional Conference told Ecumenical News International. "We don't understand why."

Egeland, on March 5 visited the area where one of Africa's longest and bloodiest conflicts appeared to have drawn to a close. But he said the United Nations was

not getting the money it needed to help returning refugees or the war-stricken population living in the area.

"I fear the world is making an historic mistake here in southern Sudan," Egeland said in an interview broadcast on BBC radio. "Now we have a peace agreement. Now we have three, four months of cementing that peace agreement. The world has to respond. It is unbelievable they are waiting."

Sudan needs about US\$500 million for immediate needs, but only US\$24 million has been received, two months after the signing of the agreement.

The Rev. Fred Nyabera, the acting director of the Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in the Great Lakes and the Horn of Africa, urged the international community to sustain a mo-

mentum that existed before the signing of the deal. This was the only way to realize peace in the country where 2 million people have died in the war and another 5 million have been displaced.

"The world should not relax the goodwill if we are to see the positive side of the peace agreement," he said, noting that his church grouping was hoping to train "messengers of peace" among Sudanese refugees so they could spread news of peace when they finally return home.

Earlier at a special meeting in Nairobi on February 26, the Sudan Roman Catholic bishops cited immediate needs of food, shelter, water, medical care, personal security and educational facilities for the large numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons who have begun returning to their home areas.

Muslim militants in Nigeria kill 36 in Christian community

Obed Minchakpu

MAYOLOPE, Nigeria (Compass) – Muslim militants attacked the Christian community in Demsa village, Adamawa state, northern Nigeria, on Friday, February 4, killing 36 people, destroying property and displacing about 3,000 others. The surviving Christians took refuge in Mayolope village in the neighboring state of Taraba.

Alhaji Saleh Jatau, a Muslim who spoke to Compass in Mayolope, confirmed the attack on Demsa. However, he said the militants do not have the support of the Muslim community when they attack Christians.

"I am appealing that the government should act quickly to end this conflict. We have lived in peace with Christians, but now some of us [Muslims] have decided

to cause problems between us," Jatau told Compass.

"I have lived with Christians in our village for 51 years, and I have never witnessed any crisis where people are being killed without caution as it happened that day. Most of the people here [in the camp] have vowed never to return to the village until the government finds a lasting solution to the problems."

While visiting the displaced Christians on February 7, Rev. Jolly Nyame, governor of the state of Taraba, expressed sadness over the attacks and said the country could progress only through peaceful coexistence.

"No community can move forward while crisis takes the center stage. It is only peace that can usher in develop-

ment in the country," he told the refugees. "Only tolerance and forgiveness can bring about peaceful co-existence among people of different religious backgrounds."

He further said the Nigerian government needs to check the activities of Muslim militants which have provoked crises in different parts of the country.

The attack on Demsa village by Muslim militants is the second in Adamawa state. Numan, also in Adamawa, has been under siege since a religious crisis that erupted there two years ago over the killing of Pastor Esther Ethan Jinkai. The situation worsened in January when another Christian woman was killed by soldiers deployed to keep peace.

Churches challenged by shifting demographics, says WCC's Kobia

Jerry L. Van Marter

Geneva (ENI) – Christianity is undergoing a shift from the northern to the southern hemispheres, with a marked growth in informal Christianity represented by mega-churches, the Rev. Samuel Kobia, general secretary of the World Council of Churches (WCC) said in an address to the main governing body of the WCC. It was his first address to the central committee since he became the first African to head the ecumenical organization in January 2004.

"Christianity's centre of gravity is undergoing a demographic shift from North to South, simultaneously with marked growth in the 'informal sector' of Christianity represented by mega-churches and other expressions of post-denominationalism, including a 'spirituality' not tied to traditional institutions," noted Kobia, in his address.

Kobia's remarks came as a grouping

of Lutheran churches worldwide, the Lutheran World Federation, released statistics showing Africa to be the region where its membership is experiencing the most rapid growth.

Reflecting on his first year at the head of the WCC, Kobia, a Methodist from Kenya, said the new phenomenon was not limited to religious institutions.

"The storming into history by the non-formal, non-organized ways of responding to human need has been so phenomenal that even governments are in competition for resources," he said.

In this changing world, Kobia noted, "we are witnessing a new ideology which is not essentially driven by ideas of how to organize and facilitate constructive change in society, but is rather concerned with gaining greater capacity to control and dominate both the people and natural resources of this world."

This confrontational world view "perpetuates the logic of competition, war and violence," Kobia said. And it is "full of religious symbolism of good and evil in which God is invoked," Kobia asserted, "and invoked arbitrarily to suit a particular agenda for aggression."

Kobia, who has visited six of the seven WCC's geographic regions in his first year as general secretary, admitted his assessment "may seem to paint a bleak and gloomy portrait of the world." But he said he has seen an equal number of hopeful signs.

Everywhere he travelled, Kobia said, "voices are raised vowing that 'another world is possible'." This was evidence, he insisted, "of a rising spirituality of resistance and hope, of a world in which those who have been marginalized are taking action to transform their environment and institutions."

'Mr Bean' and his allies combat English religious hate law

Cedric Fulford

London (ENI) – Spreading the word to other faith groups, criticizing another religion or even making jokes about ayatollahs could be things of the past in England if the fears of a campaign fighting planned legislation are realized.

An unusual alliance of evangelical Christians, militant secularists and professional comedians has emerged to oppose a measure outlawing "incitement to religious hatred" because they think it will stifle legitimate religious activity and comment in England and Wales.

"The right to offend is more important than the right not to be offended," comedian Rowan Atkinson, whose hapless Mr. Bean and devious Blackadder television characters are popular around the world, said at the launch of the campaign.

"The planned law, although well-intentioned, is not workable. It will create the situation it is aiming to avoid [animosity against faith groups]," Don Horrocks, chief spokesman of the Evangelical Alliance, with more than one million members, told ENI. He said existing laws were strong enough to fight religious hatred.

Other members of the campaign against the measure, which is part of the Serious Organised Crime and Police Bill, include the National Secular Society, the Barnabas Fund (a Christian group) and the Lawyers' Christian Fellowship.

The British government insists that the planned law is aimed only at acts inciting hatred against a religious group, particularly Islam. The offence will not cover people who ridicule, criticize or offend people of other religions, Home Secretary (interior minister) David Blunkett told Britain's lower parliamentary house, when the proposed law received its second reading.

Critics, however, fear that in practice the measure will lead to self-censorship with people keeping quiet in case they are accused of incitement. Religious jokes like Atkinson's own bumbling vicar in the film "Four Weddings and a Funeral" would also be a casualty of the proposed law, they suspect.

For mainstream church leaderships, such fears are misplaced. The (Anglican) Church of England, the Roman Catholic Church and the Methodist Church have all given general support to the measure.

Manchester's Church of England Bishop Nigel McCulloch stressed that the law needed to allow rational discussion and criticism of religion, "even in sharp terms," and should also permit proselytizing. Austen Ivereigh, a Catholic spokesman, said the church particularly welcomed "any efforts to curb the rise of Islamophobia."

Elizabeth Harris, Methodist secretary for inter-faith relations, said the measure was "a question of justice in solidarity with those within other religions who have been calling for it for some time". The church would hold the government to its stated intention of not restricting evangelism or criticism of other religions.

This is the second time the government is trying to introduce a law against incitement to religious hatred. Its previous attempt was in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 terror attacks in the United States. The measure must also clear the upper chamber of parliament, the House of Lords, where such laws can be blocked.

60th Anniversary

A guide to Canadian politics and a call to join the fight against Catholicism and Communism

An article in *CC* March 1, 1952 takes on the task of explaining Canadian democracy to the Dutch immigrants. Don't be fooled into thinking that democracies are the same everywhere. Canada's form of government is a mixture of British and American ideas. On the federal level it works a lot like the English system but in terms of the relationship between the federal and provincial governments it has to some extent copied the American.

The Governor General represents the English queen and is thus the symbolic center of authority. (A picture of Vincent Massey being installed as the new Governor General of Canada was on the *CC* cover.) All laws need his signature to be valid. But in fact he has as little clout as Queen Juliana. Next in order of authority, the article says, is the Senate, appointed for life. Every law and decision must be approved by the senate. In actual fact, the Senate has as little authority as the Governor-general.

"It meets a couple of times a year, rages at everything that it doesn't like, but in the end it signs the decisions of parliament, grumbling all the while, and sends them on to the Governor-general, who also has no choice but to sign it."

The new immigrants must have had a good laugh at that. And the article adds that the Senate is often the butt of jokes and cartoons. That's singling out the Senate unfairly; the Prime Minister and Parliament surely have always garnered their fair share of cartoons.

In any case, *CC* readers are informed that the Governor-general and the Senate collect nice salaries for doing nothing.

After comparing the way members are elected and the cabinet is formed, the writer (unnamed) concludes that in Canada it is the strongest party that rules and that smaller parties have little or no chance to establish themselves.

"Anyone accustomed to Dutch politics is inclined to find Canadian politics ludicrous. And they are – as many Canadian politicians admit."

After once again expressing wonderment at the salary of the Opposition Leader, who gets paid just to criticize the government, the writer expresses his greatest wonderment at the relationship between the Liberal and Conservative parties. "They act as if they are bitter enemies, but when it really

comes down to it, there is hardly any difference in their platforms. What really divides them is that they both want to form the government...."

Originally Liberals and Conservatives were divided over duties on imports. The Conservatives wanted to protect Canadian industry, especially from U.S. industry, so that it got a chance to develop, so they were in favor of high import duties. The Liberals were more in favor of free trade. However, says the writer, this difference is no longer true.

"This is enough to demonstrate that the political parties of Canada neither represent nor have they arisen from different worldviews.... In Canada politics is determined by commercial or if you will economic issues.

"That strikes us as very strange, but we must remember that Canada's beginnings and development were economically determined, while The Netherlands arose out of religious wars. Canada arose out of a struggle for material goods; while The Netherlands arose from a struggle about spiritual goods."

Not a bad overview. I cited this article at some length to demonstrate that *CC* has brimmed with insight from its earliest days.

All that insight, however, seemed not to be adequately appreciated, for in the same issue the editor complains that 40 percent of the subscribers haven't paid up. Anyone two months in arrears, warns the editor, will be dropped.

Coloring your margarine

Remember buying margarine or oleo in the 50's? It came with a small packet of food coloring in Alberta. The only province in which you could buy yellow margarine was Newfoundland. *CC* tells us that this was due to pressure from the dairy industry. Margarine was about half the price of butter and the dairy industry wanted it to look like lard.

In fact, in 1952 you couldn't even buy margarine in Quebec and Prince Edward Island.

Consumer organizations were trying to change all that but were strongly opposed by the dairies.



No, Governor General, that's not all you get. You also get a handsome chair.

CC MARCH 1952

As kids we first thought it fun to mix the coloring into the margarine, but that novelty soon wore off. During the winter months, I greatly preferred margarine over butter. It didn't get as hard in the cold kitchen and didn't tear huge, gaping holes in your bread. The bread disintegrated very easily in those days. It was that white fluffy stuff. In the summertime you had to weigh it down with something to keep an errant breeze from blowing it right off the table and out the door. We kids used to take a slice of bread and squeeze it down to a one-inch cube. "Don't you dare waste that!" Mother would say, wagging a finger, and she'd keep a close eye on us to see that we ate it. Often the warning would be followed by a story about the dreadful "hunger winter" they had endured in 1944, which we children, of course, took to heart.

Relations between Canada and the U.S. haven't changed much over the last 50 years as one news story from *CC* illustrates. Eighteen people jumped out of an American plane flying in the neighborhood of Sydney, Nova Scotia. The plane got into trouble during a heavy snowstorm. All eighteen landed safely. Yes, they were wearing parachutes. The plane crashed.

To this day Canada still stands prepared to receive Americans and American technology that come falling out of the sky.

Dutch Calvinists as freedom fighters

J.K. van Baalen reported that

tion that when these initial pains of settling in a new country shall have passed, there is important work for them to do ... in a land with which our God has great intentions."

I'm not sure that very many of the Kuyperians among the immigrants would have shouted a loud Amen to the proposition that they had come to Canada to join the fight against Catholics and Communists.

The same issue of *CC* reported that at last coffee was no longer being rationed in The Netherlands. However, prices had shot up so high that one cartoon showed a ten-guilder bill with the caption, "The new coffee ration card."

Warning for city folk

A. de Jager, writing a column called (in Dutch) "The voice of Alberta," sketches a typical family drama related to what he calls the "city problem." He describes a family that has immigrated to Alberta from the city of Haarlem sponsored by an Alberta farmer. The whole family ended up working in the sugar beets in southern Alberta. A couple of the older sons were high school graduates with further diplomas and had held office jobs in The Netherlands. Similarly, of the oldest girls, one had worked in a store and the other had been a stenographer. Then there were several other children still of school age.

The father had been told that with such a large family of workers, they would do well on a farm in southern Alberta.

Not long after their arrival, however, the Mrs. (who insisted on being called "mevrouw") came crying to the minister about how she was going mad in her small house set out there in the vast and silent space of the prairie. And the children weren't overly thrilled to be working among the sugar beets either. To make a long story short, one day the whole family picked up and headed for the big city, unable to make the transition to farm life.

De Jager warns that the Dutch city dweller who can make the transition to farm life is the exception. The average city-dweller simply cannot muster the energy.

I suspect, that it wasn't just a lack of energy. De Jager's understanding of psychology was a bit thin. Maybe they just wanted to go somewhere where they could fight Catholics and Communists.

60th Anniversary

Season of the heart

Tom Polet

"What makes the road of life so tolerable is the loving you find along the way."

In the relaxing atmosphere of his living room and in between several cups of coffee Herman began to tell me about the early years of his life in Canada. The stories are stored in his memory banks, but, as good stories go, they can be recalled any time; all one has to do is press: Enter. One cannot easily forget that each little story has formed a furrow in life's journey and the culmination of all of them is the reality of one's existence.

So it is with Herman.

We go back to the early 50's when so many immigrant vessels plied the waters of the Atlantic Ocean. These were no cruise ships but cattle haulers, and many immigrants must have wondered why they left the meat pots of home in exchange for these vessels of vomit and doom.

What a relief it must have been to finally step off the gang plank unto Pier 21 at Halifax and find solid ground under foot again. For many it was no less momentous than the first giant step on the moon – a step into the unknown territory.

Among these post-war adventurers were Herman and his wife, Jantje and their six-month-old daughter. The name Jantje did not last very long, because at their first meeting with the home missionary he suggested that the name should be changed to Janet. And so they did, to the chagrin of parents in Holland, who had her baptized as Jantje and wrote: "What kind of country is that where they can just change names at will?"

"Don't worry about them," Herman said to Janet, "They are far enough away they can't be a bother to us."

That was not a smart thing to say, because it released a flood of pent-up tears of homesickness. It was not the last time that Herman wished he had bitten his tongue.

Riding the train through the western part of Ontario did nothing to instill enthusiasm in the new immigrants. Miles upon miles of forest with here and there a log cabin or a makeshift shed and a Buick in front. The Buick impressed them, not the cabin. Little did they know that their first home would not be any more appealing.

When they finally crossed the

border of Manitoba and entered the prairies Herman's heart began to pound. For the first time he began to be convinced that a country with so much fertile land must be able to provide a future for him too.

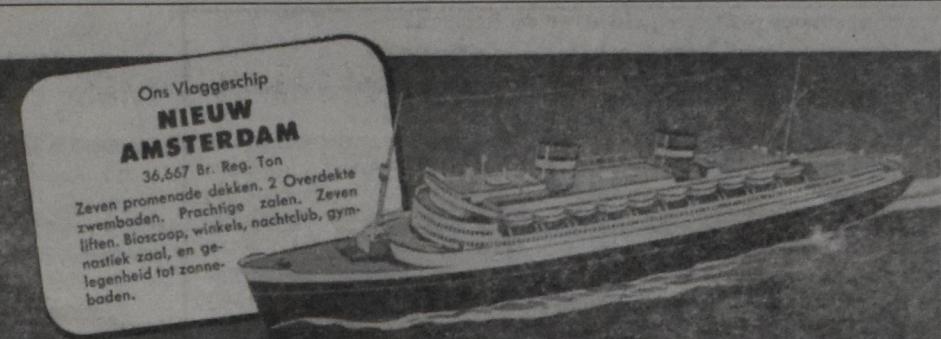
And so with a great deal of anticipation they arrived in Edmonton. Herman Wieringa, the fieldman, picked them up at the station and brought them to Herman's brother, who had immigrated earlier. Close to his place they soon found a small two-room house that they were able to rent from a farmer for \$25.00 per month. Working for a farmer did not appeal to Herman, because when winter came there would be no work, so Herman found work at a machine shop in Edmonton.

But that meant he needed transportation. For \$150 he was able to buy a 1948 Chevy. However, the tires were so bad that he had to repair a flat almost daily until at last the tubes could no longer be patched. Jim Karpentiuk, the service station owner on the Four-mile Road, provided him with four new tires on a payment schedule of \$8.00 per month until paid. Now there were no more excuses for being late at work or church, the two places that had a time schedule.

But the house – that was another story. In the tiny second bedroom Janet had put up the crib for the baby, but most of the room was taken up with water barrels. There was no well on the property, so once a week the water truck would come by and hose the water into the barrels through the bedroom window. A round washtub was placed in a corner of the kitchen, and that functioned as bathtub.

The house was also badly insulated or actually not insulated at all. In those days wood shavings were blown in between the two by fours for insulation, but the weight would eventually sink them to the bottom and that allowed the wind to find its way through the cracks in the siding. Herman dubbed it as "built-in air conditioning."

But Janet was not impressed, because when the winter storms were howling the "air conditioner"



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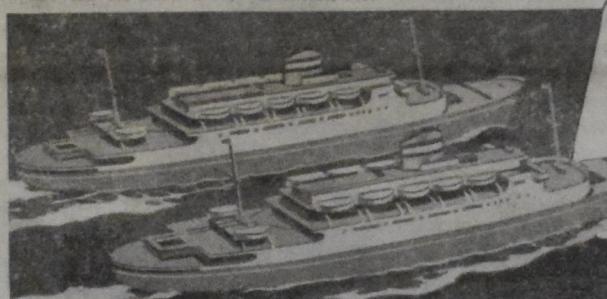
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turned the walls and floors into solid ice, so much so that when they dared to get up in the morning their bare feet stuck to the linoleum.

But Herman solved the problem. He gave Janet a sheep fleece for Christmas which was deposited in front of the bed. Beyond the fleece Janet was on her own.

One winter in this habitat of inhumanity was enough for his Janet. The following spring Herman was able to rent 20 acres of land, which he planned to farm in his spare time. There was a house on it, not much better than what they had left, but it had a well and an indoor pump, so that was

already an improvement. Before the winter Herman piled bales of straw around the outside of the house, but that did not prevent the pump pipes from freezing during a classic prairie snowstorm.

Herman went to the neighbors to borrow a blowtorch, but the ancient thing was leaking and huge flames emanated from it. That scared the living daylights out of Janet, and grabbing a pail of water she threw it on the flames. But now the whole kitchen floor was on fire.

Quickly they stripped the blankets off the bed and the sheep fleece off the bedroom floor and threw them on the flames. The fire was doused and the pipes thawed

out, but they had to go into town to buy new blankets.

This time Herman bit his tongue.

That winter was a season of the heart. Not only were Herman and Janet convinced that things would get better, but they also welcomed their second child, a boy.

And when spring came, Herman itched to put his hand to the plow to till the earth. They were content, happy and full of hope. That is usually the case when there is much loving along the way.

Like the Bible says: "Faith, Hope and Love, but the greatest of these is Love."

Christian life

Intangible Things

Heidi Vanderlikke

Few things inspire me to get up in the middle of a cold winter's night, but the prospect of ending the day in a tropical paradise took the edge off the icy wind. For five and a half hours we sat in the airplane. Jack watched the in-flight movie and listened to tapes. I read a Grisham novel and dreamed of floating on the Caribbean Sea.

By the time we landed in Barbados, made our way through the airport, caught the shuttle to our hotel and checked in, there was only enough daylight left for a stroll down the beach before sunset. We wandered along the shoreline, relishing the soft white sand underfoot, laughing as the waves foamed around our ankles. I couldn't wait to go swimming the next day.

As soon as breakfast was over I left Jack in the hotel room and made my way to the beach. Twenty four hours before we had left Toronto with a temperature of -28 C. Now it wasn't even 10:00 in the morning and it was already +28. The sky overhead was as blue as the photos in the travel brochures and the sun danced enticingly off the waves. People lounged on the sand, a few joggers ran along the water's edge, here and there children built sandcastles. The waves thundered along shore. Beyond the breaker line the ocean swelled rhythmically, like a playful giant.

I noticed no one was in the water. I also noticed little red flags planted about every 50 feet, and the sign that warned, "No swimming when red flags are posted." Another read, "No lifeguard." Just behind the beach, people splashed in the hotel swimming pools, but I looked longingly out at the ocean. I closed my eyes and inhaled deeply. My Father's world, I thought.

A couple from the airplane approached me and introduced themselves. We made small talk for a few minutes and I tried not to look as impatient as I felt. Finally they continued with their promenade. I tossed my T-shirt onto a nearby lounge chair and waded into the waves. Standing in knee-deep water I turned around to look again at the red flags, and thought, they're not for me. I'm a good swimmer. I eased in up to my chest. A big wave appeared from nowhere and I pulled up my legs and let it carry me back toward the shore.

I slouched back in, this time up to my waist. All of a sudden a breaker crashed in front of me, swept over my head and knocked me down. I held my breath and stretched my legs to reach bottom. My feet touched the sand and I stood up; just long enough for the next wave to slap me back under. The undertow pulled my body out, away from the beach and I no longer knew which way was up. I reached my arms over my head. My hands hit bottom. All the while I tumbled along

Oh...those red flags

helplessly, like a sock in the washing machine. Suddenly my knees skidded into the sand. I struggled to my feet, gasping for air. One more huge wave came along and whacked my backside, as if to say, "And don't come back!" I emerged from the waves about 100 feet west of where I had waded in, and staggered back to the chair where I had left my shirt and towel.

My heart rate was almost back to normal when Jack came along.

He eyed my bedraggled hair and sand-encrusted limbs and asked, "How was it?"

I smiled sheepishly and said, "Oh, a little rough. You're actually not supposed to swim when the red flags are up. Better stick to the pools today."

We dragged our chairs under a Casuarina tree and spent the rest of the day alternating between the shade and the pool.

I didn't tell him about my near-death adventure until the next day when he invited me to go into the ocean. At first I told him I'd just sit on the beach for awhile, but watching him wade in and noting the distinct absence of red flags, I finally took his hand and cautiously braved the waves again. Bobbing up and down on the gentle swells I thought back to my stupidity of the previous day. No. It was more than stupidity. It was nothing less than arrogance.

I didn't see another red flag for the entire vacation. Every day was beautiful beyond belief. I swam and floated and loafed on the beach to my heart's content. But I never forgot the lesson I learned on that first day.

And I realized how often I do the same thing in so many other areas of my life. For instance, speed limits don't actually apply to me and I treat stop signs as if they were suggestions. I stay up late, get up early and then can't understand why I'm tired. I couldn't tell you how much trans-fat I consume in a week, but I'm sure that high cholesterol or clogged arteries will never be my problem. Yeah, right.

I even do it in my spiritual life. As Easter approaches and I contemplate the price Jesus paid for the sins of "the world," I place myself outside of that context. Too often I take the attitude that he didn't have to shed blood on my behalf. My sins are not that grievous. What's more, I live as if the red flags in this world aren't meant for me.

Thank God every once in awhile he knocks me off my feet, drags me under water and spits me back onto shore to reconsider. Otherwise I would have drowned a long time ago.

Heidi Vanderlikke lives in Harriston, Ont. Her email: hvanderslikke@hotmail.com



Many churches – yet one holy catholic church

Dr. Remkes Kooistra

Whoever wants to say something about pluriformity will almost certainly end by quoting two texts that relate to our topic. The first one is Ephesians 3:8-10, where the apostle Paul writes:

Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given to me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms. (NIV)

The second text was written by the apostle Peter (1 Peter 4:10). In accordance with his character, it is more direct and pastoral by stating:

Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. (NIV)

Both texts have a ring of pluriformity in them. The Ephesians text speaks of "the manifold wisdom of God," and Peter mentions "God's grace in its various forms." Nature itself is showing in its richness of species, forms, and colours a picture of a never exhaustive variety, part of God's wonderful creation. It seems, writes Berkouwer, that God loves variety. Did not Abraham Kuyper call uniformity the curse of modern life?

Often church people have accepted the pluriformity of the church as a special gift from God. They admitted: true, not everything was as it should be in the church. But Berkouwer, and others as well, see in the brokenness of the church and its many schisms not so much a display of God's wonderful created pluriformity but rather the results of our sinfully seeking our own glory.

Yet, it seems that the dawning of the doctrine of pluriformity in the church was a historical necessity. This unavoidable pluriformity was also used by Satan as an opportunity by which he tried to break apart the church of Jesus Christ. But a positive appreciation remained nevertheless. The word "pluriformity" had a welcome sound. There was no hostility in that word. Only a kind of ecumenical appreciation and acceptance.

Kuyper points out the multicoloured wisdom of God by comparing the prophecies of Isaiah and Amos and by noticing the differences in style between the letters of Paul and James and even between letters written by the same apostle.

The church reveals itself in different forms or shapes. In defense Kuyper said, "When Christ gets shape in the believer, the laws of development and of subjectivity will also start working." In the third volume of his work Common Grace, Kuyper wrote

this strong statement: "Our natural one-sidedness will always keep on asking for a multiplicity of formations in the activities in the church of Jesus Christ." It seems almost impossible in our age for the church with its multiple dimensions to avoid some kind of pluriformity.

The Roman Catholic Theo Bensdorp strongly opposed the doctrine of the pluriformity by asking questions as these: How can people who oppose each other still adhere to the same truth? And how can confessions which condemn each other in no uncertain terms at the same time be "forms" of the revealed truth?

Kuyper was of the opinion that some kind of harmony could exist in the controversy between people who defended transubstantiation and others who confessed consubstantiation in the doctrine about the Lord's Supper. He suggested that there is still some harmony in the manner in which the mystic unity with Christ is enjoyed by Roman Catholics as well as Protestants in the sacrament. He called this a harmony at a "deeper level."

It seems quite possible to me that Kuyper's discovery of this "deeper level" was motivated by a Christian intuition. Sometimes faith is stronger than dogmatic statements. I have noticed this at funerals. On the opposite side, I have also noticed that dogmatic differences may prevent believers from celebrating the unity which actually exists between them.

I always will remember a Sunday afternoon visit with a Roman Catholic. My host had invited him for a "friendly" discussion at his house. At first the visit was friendly and went well. I asked some questions for information, but this did not seem to satisfy my Reformed host. After a little while, he interrupted our talk by saying, "Reverend, why don't you say now that the Roman Catholic mass is an 'accursed idolatry'?" After this there was some silence and our Roman Catholic visitor soon found an excuse to leave.

Bensdorp refused to accept Kuyper's vision. To him Kuyper's vision was too subjective (even ultra-subjective), whereas he himself defended the objective truth. The "objective truth," however, is marred by many schisms, by lovelessness and bitter quarrels. Does this mean that there is still an opportunity for the opening up of the pluriformity of the church? Before 1054 there was no pluriformity, there was only the church of Jesus Christ. Then the first schism came, and we had an Eastern church and a Western one. During the time of the Reformation (16th century) the churches split much more. The relationship between these churches often was hostile. The pope and Martin Luther both were called the antichrist. According to recent statistics, we have now more than 2500 different denominations, every one calling itself church. But this is an anomaly.

Christian life



Village with church by Jacob van Ruisdael

History means change. We see two important changes in the church with regard to the doctrine of pluriuniformity. On the one hand there is a softer attitude among the churches toward each other. There is an awakening desire for and practice of ecumenism. Instead of condemning each other, now we see churches working together.

This is especially prominent in the diaconal work of the churches. If there is a flood somewhere, we see Roman Catholics, Reformed Christians, and Mennonites working together in an unselfish manner. This also happens when calamities such as tsunamis strike our globe. On the other hand, we still see the number of different churches growing. Not all these churches can be true churches.

Should we again be trying to find the one church that follows in the line of the apostles? Even if we were able to find the answer to our satisfaction, there is no guarantee that other Christians would accept our answer. What is the true church for one might be a false church for others.

But the idea and ideal of the one sole church still persist. Many people seemed to think that pluriuniformity could only exist within the one, the all-inclusive catholic church. Even in 1864 the Roman Catholic Church rejected the idea that the church could have several branches, namely a Roman Catholic one, a Greek Orthodox one and an Anglican one. The Roman Catholic Church claimed to be the only true church with "one Lord, one hope, one baptism." Yet, in the course of time the acknowledgment of other Christian communities – a new ecumenism – became more urgent also in the Roman Catholic Church and gained in actuality.

In this way, a problem that had been discussed for decades in the Protestant churches became unavoidable also for the Roman Catholic Church, namely the acknowledgment of traces (*vestigia*) of the church of Jesus Christ in other faith-communities as well.

Such an acknowledgment is not identical

with the doctrine of the pluriuniformity of the church. When we talk about "traces" or "*vestigia*," we maintain a critical distance from other churches. Often it becomes apparent that the acknowledgment of these traces does not necessarily mean an increase in ecumenical understanding and closeness. John Calvin refers often to the *vestigia ecclesiae* (traces of the church). He stresses the fact that, even in the conflict situation of his days – and he condemned the papal-minded people in no uncertain terms – he would not deny them the "traces which the Lord from the breaking up among them (the splitting up) has left over."

On the one hand, we see how papal authority has made a ruin of the church. Yet, all is not lost. There are characteristics of the church that have remained and will remain, those which cannot be destroyed by either the devil or by evil human tactics. So we see that on the one hand Calvin recognizes that some evidence of the church still exists in the *vestigia*, while on the other hand he talks very critically about the church he knew and criticized.

Today we see in Calvin's explanation a clear indication of a change in ecclesiastical insight and interpretation. We may notice the signs of God's care and faithfulness on which also the *vestigia* are grounded. There are today signs of rapprochement which are encouraging. The Dutch episcopacy spoke of enjoying the respect between the Roman Catholic and the Protestant churches, which is not limited to the acknowledgment of the sacrament of baptism, but includes the life of the church (being the church of Jesus Christ). Protestants have given up identifying the pope with the antichrist, and the Roman Catholic Church has acknowledged elements of being the church in other churches. There is change and progress.

This stands out also in the so-called Toronto Statement of the World Council of Churches:

"The Churches which are members of the ecumenical Council acknowledge also in

Offering hospitality can be a godly activity

Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition by Christine D. Pohl (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999)

Reviewed by Sonya Vanderveen-Feddema

According to author Christine Pohl, hospitality as a way of life "reflects and anticipates God's welcome" and often involves "small deaths and little resurrections." Her observations are based on the time she spent in eight communities – including L'Abri Fellowship, L'Arche, and the Catholic Worker – that have chosen hospitality as a way of life. Her informative and inspiring book helps readers to remember the historical Christian tradition of hospitality, to reconsider the pros and cons of that tradition, and to recover the practice of hospitality today.

Pohl points out that the term "hospitality" is used differently today than it was historically. Over the last 300 years, the word has lost its "moral dimensions." Instead of describing the welcoming of strangers into a home to care for their basic needs – in Christ's name – it now often refers to entertaining family and friends, or to the hospitality industry such as hotels and restaurants. As a result, she laments, "most Christians have lost touch with the amazingly rich and complex tradition of hospitality."

Early church leaders, including John Chrysostom, Martin Luther, and John Calvin, encouraged Christians "to see in the stranger the image of God and our common flesh." In the first seventeen centuries of church history hospitality to strangers helped "the spread and credibility of the gospel," and allowed the church to grow because it broke down national, societal, and ethnic barriers.

Pohl spells out why Christian hospitality to strangers virtually disappeared, despite its significant role in the church's growth. As one example, she cites the fact that hospitals, hospices, and hostels – though initially meant to provide personal care for strangers – increasingly distanced themselves from the very people who needed their care.

Besides outlining the early church's historical response to hospitality, Pohl studies the biblical tradition of hospitality, highlighting the stories of Abraham and Sarah, Lot and the angels, and Elijah and Elisha. Also, she shows how Israel's identity as strangers in a foreign land both defined who they were in covenant relationship to God, and helped them to empathize with the feelings and needs of sojourners, the poor, and the marginalized. She concludes that "the theological and moral foundations for Old Testament hospitality were tied closely to Israel's special relationship of dependence on and gratitude to God."

As Pohl encourages readers to think through the practice of hospitality to strangers, she points out that hospitality isn't "a tame and pleasant practice." Rather, it has "a subversive, counter cultural dimension" because it respects, welcomes, and cares for those members of society who are neglected, dishonored, or maltreated. Especially insightful are her thoughts on the "power of recognition" found in chapter 4. When practitioners of hospitality understand that God is at work in the life of each stranger he puts on their path, they will extend to that person the dignity due them. For people who have been discarded, disrespected, and ignored, being recognized as a person worthy of love can be a life-altering experience.

When encouraging Christians to recover the practice of hospitality, Pohl realistically defines the joys and hardships of the task. She says, "We cannot separate the goodness and the beauty of hospitality from its difficulty. In a paradoxical way, hospitality is simultaneously mundane and sturdy, mysterious and fragile." Struggling with limited resources, establishing healthy community boundaries, and dealing with temptations to gain or take advantage of guests all can make the healthy working out of hospitality difficult. She says, "Those who practise substantial hospitality live in the tension between finiteness and grace, heartbreak and miracle, tragedy and gift."

Pohl's book developed my understanding of biblical hospitality and increased my excitement at God's involvement in and intentions for it.

other churches elements of the true church. They should therefore become engaged in a serious discussion. From the acknowledgment of elements of truth they should proceed to an acceptance of the full truth."

In the discovery of elements or traces of the truth lies also the promise of a better understanding of each other in the future. Calvin started this change by recognizing the *vestigia* (traces) of the truth in other churches. Baptism, he saw, is a work of God and has a lasting power. The process of recognizing in other churches the traces of the truth is ongoing. These traces are val-

able, for they have their origin in Christ, and the church is built up by them, even when there is not a complete acknowledgment of their truth.

It allows us to begin to see that the unity in Christ is to be found in a spiritual bond of faith with Christ. This means that the solution of being the Church of Jesus Christ in our time cannot be found in an easy acceptance of pluriuniformity.

At this point Berkouwer says that there is one more problem that needs to be discussed, namely that of proselytism. This word does

See Church p. 16 ...

Biblical wisdom**Sounding the unfathomable ground of our existence****A. A. Van Ruler**

There is nothing better for a man, than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labor. This also I saw, that it was from the hand of God.

For who can eat, or who else can hasten hereunto, more than I?

For God giveth to a man that is good in his sight wisdom, and knowledge, and joy: but to the sinner he giveth travail, to gather and to heap up, that he may give to him that is good before God. This also is vanity and vexation of spirit. (KJV)

A man can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in his work. This too, I see, is from the hand of God, for without him, who can eat or find enjoyment? To the man who pleases him, God gives wisdom, knowledge and happiness, but to the sinner he gives the task of gathering and storing up wealth to hand it over to the one who pleases God. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind. (NIV)

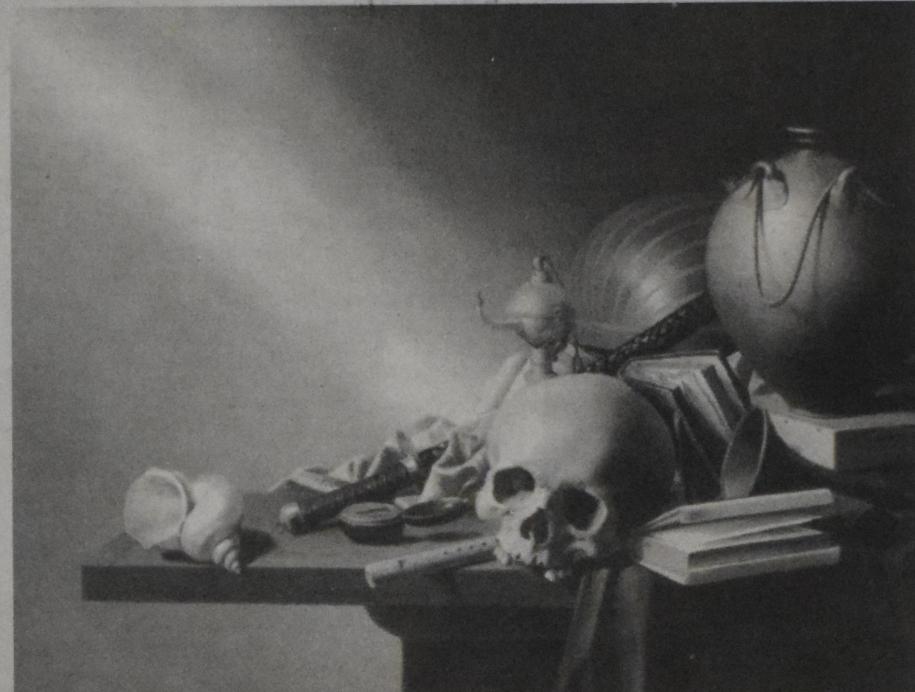
Ecclesiastes 2:24-26

In the preceding section the Preacher pondered the fact that the wise die just like the foolish. At death a person has to leave behind to those who come after all that he has accomplished during his life, without any certainty as to whether or not it will end up in trustworthy hands.

While pondering this, he happens upon the trail of a new, more universal viewpoint. This consists in the fact that a man does not really have control of anything, not even of his eating and drinking or his enjoyment of earthly goods.

There are, strange as it may seem, people who cannot enjoy things. They live under constant pressure. All sorts of things press in upon their lives. They are overwhelmed by them. They are constantly preoccupied with them. Although they try to rise above them, they don't succeed. Ever again they are inundated and overwhelmed by a flood of facts and tasks. In the meantime, life passes them by, and they are never really able to come to a point where they can allow themselves to be struck by the goodness and beauty of life and simply to enjoy it.

On the other hand, there are also those who are able to rise above things right from the beginning. They are able to enjoy life to the full. To them it is very simple. Each day comes to them like a ripe peach waiting to be plucked and they pluck it. They are able to do so inwardly. They are able placidly to let things come their way and to enjoy them. Very often they are also able to do so out-



Allegory of the vanities of human life by Harmen Steenwyck, 1650

wardly. They are born with a silver spoon in their mouths; everything goes their way.

That people respond to life so differently is indeed a puzzle. It gives some indication of how extremely and deeply dependent we really are. We owe not only our life and prosperity to someone else but also our ability to enjoy them. It is an ability given to some, but not to others.

Putting it in theological terms

At first glance, we are inclined to say that this is simply the way things are: one person is born with one kind of fate and someone else with another. True, to be sure. But such an observation does not plumb very deeply. It does no more than state a fact; it doesn't explain anything. In any case, it provides no answer at all to the awesome questions that arise in this connection.

Why is one person born with one kind of fate and someone else with another? Such questions cause most people to choke up. They babble vaguely about chance or fate, about some whimsy of nature, or about the conjunction of the planets at the hour of birth.

The Preacher has the courage to formulate the matter entirely in "theological" terms. Even when reality is bewildering and irrational, he thinks it through until he comes to God. He says that the reason one is born able to enjoy things rests in the fact that he pleases God. This is to say that it pleases God to allow him to exist in this manner. The reason someone else is born with a completely different kind of fate, and that all his life he is oppressed by things – never getting to the point where he can enjoy them even once – resides in the fact that it does not please God, that is to say, it pleases God to let him exist in another manner.

The Preacher drops his sounding line extremely deep. It sinks down through all created reality to reach the good pleasure of the Creator. And even there it finds no ground. As soon as the sounding line of our rational thought reaches the waters of God's eternal, free and omnipotent good pleasure, it keeps sinking deeper and deeper into eternity. For there is no human, rational ground to be found to God's good pleasure.

We should, therefore, take care not to oversimplify the problem. We do this when we claim that we know who is pleasing to God and who is not, and that we also know why. Then the Preacher would have said: the man who lives according to God's will and commandments is pleasing to God and to such a man he gives the ability to enjoy things. But the man who is not pleasing to God – because he does not worry about God or his commandments – God will abandon to lifelong misery. If this is what the Preacher meant, he wouldn't complain so stridently.

For in that case, even if the world did not have a rational construction, at least it would have a moral construction. Everything would click perfectly. There would be no reason for the Preacher to say, this too is vanity, meaningless, a chasing after the wind.

Reality is neither rational nor moral

We should, however, have the courage to see and admit that the world is *not* rationally or morally constructed. God's good pleasure is much too great and wonderful to be encompassed by the rational and moral spirit of human beings like ourselves. On the other hand, we must not immediately conclude that therefore God's good pleasure is irrational and immoral. Then we are claiming that God's free omnipotence is arbitrary merely

because it transcends our rational and moral capacities.

Sometimes this is combined with a desire to presumptuously throw ourselves into the abyss of God's arbitrariness. The more thoughtful among us, however, will not be able to help feeling disconcerted at a God who is arbitrary. But isn't it presumptuous on our part to immediately stand ready with the label "arbitrary" in this connection?

Just because something transcends our rationality and morality, is it therefore irrational and immoral? Might God not have divine grounds and norms which we cannot grasp?

We do, to be sure, have some small knowledge and realization of them in our rational grounds and moral norms. Through these we participate in God's rationality and morality. But we merely participate in them. We do not comprehend and fathom them. Therefore, we cannot depend on science and ethics. We also need faith and liturgy.

That is really too bad, says the Preacher. And it is a considerable burden. It would be much easier for us if we could depend on science and ethics for help. Then everything would be rational and moral. Then one would not have to step out of his selfhood. Nor would he have to believe and to give praise to God. There would be no place for ecstasy. Neither would there be existence – the capacity to step out of oneself and out of that which is. If everything is rational and moral, there is no need for us to go on existing. Then we would vegetate. We would be just a higher form of cattle. We would be cogs in a rational and moral cosmos.

Bumping into God

The Preacher declares that none of this is true. God's good pleasure is more divine, more incomprehensible, more unfathomable than any of these notions allow. The Preacher bumps into God's sovereign good pleasure.

It is no fun to be compelled to believe and praise God. Actually, of course, it is fun; in fact, in the last analysis it is the only fun that is available to us. But at first glance, it really doesn't look like fun. We do not believe and praise to close the circle of a closed system of reality. We do so because we notice that it cannot be closed.

Being a creature is vanity – a meaningless chasing after the wind. We don't know which end is up or what is the ground or the norm. We are extremely and deeply dependent. Without God we can do nothing. As G. Ch. Alders puts it, "Without him we cannot so much as put a bite of food into our mouths or simply enjoy something good."

We must be made aware of this. We must realize that all things come from the hand of God. We must not be too quick to celebrate this, however, but neither should we be prostrated by it. It is better if we bump into it, for then in the midst of reality we bump bodily into God himself.

Stewardship/Churches

At Easter, thoughts turn to magnificent Cathedrals

Maynard van der Galien

This Easter, if you're attending a church service, look towards the ceiling and imagine a ceiling so beautiful it took 200 artists 16 years to complete the work after the church was built.

Now if that isn't enough to comprehend, consider this: the largest church in Germany took 632 years to build.

The Cologne (Köln) Cathedral in Germany is a magnificent example of the Gothic cathedrals of northern Europe. It is huge, dark in color and is 443 ft. long and 282 ft. wide, with spires 512 ft. high. It was begun in 1248, but not completed until 1880.

I was in this huge cathedral (in 1982) and marveled at how this amazing structure stood all these years. I wondered what went into the footings and foundation to keep it from falling apart. The cathedral was only slightly damaged during World War II.

I've been inside great churches, huge cathedrals, giant palaces, and unbelievably large castles, and how they were constructed so many years ago fascinates me.

But it was in the city of St. Petersburg, in Russia, that I was mesmerized at the sight of several picturesque cathedrals. I stood inside huge Russian Orthodox cathedrals, memories of which I'll cherish forever. I say stood because there are no pews inside these magnificent structures. People stand.

St. Petersburg, one of the most beautiful cities in the world, was the capital of the Russian Empire for a little over two centuries (1712-1918).



Church of St. Peter and Paul pulpit

Our family immigrated to Canada in September of 1953. To commemorate that important event, my sister, Willie, and I took a guided tour in late August and September of 2003 of the capital cities of the Baltic countries (Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Russia and Estonia). We started the tour in Dover, England where we boarded a huge cruise ship. We had a room with an outside window on the walking deck of the ship.

We experienced rough water on the North Sea, wonderful sightseeing going through the Kiel Canal in Germany and an experience of a lifetime cruising the Baltic Sea and the Swedish Archipelagos. We took bus tours of all the capital cities, we visited small towns, we were on a large-scale beef farm in Finland, a flat valley grain farm in Norway – lots of sightseeing and good food. Then back to London, where we spent two days before flying back home.

One of the tours we took in Russia was of the Cathedrals of St. Petersburg. We visited the St. Nicholas Cathedral, which was started in 1753. The Peter and Paul Cathedral was built in the 1700's. Its bell-tower supports a tall spire crowned with an angel carrying a cross. The height of the spire is an amazing 123 metres.

See Cathedrals p. 16...

Russian Orthodox Church,
Tallinn, Estonia

VAN DER GALIEN PHOTO

Reflections on Stewardship

Rick De Graaf

to give a gift of your time, your talents or your home, business or farm.

"You may have heard of random acts of kindness. Well instead of a random act, why not offer a deliberate act of kindness this week to someone else? Please do this: consider and then write down what you are led to promise to do for someone else this week. There's an index card in the pew for that purpose. Children, we invite you to participate as well.

"We'll wait a bit so that you can think about this, and write it down. A few moments later we will begin to take up the offering of your money and your cards. We'll bring the offering forward and ask the Lord to bless all our gifts – including what we offered to do this week. Later, your deacons will read the cards once more and again pray for God's blessing. We are not asking you to put your name on the card unless you would like the deacons to pray specifically for you and what you intend to do. The deacons will commit this to prayer. Next week we'll ask how you did."

Can you imagine what would happen in our communities if we all gave in this way? Is this not what the Apostle James teaches in James 2:14-26?

Our stewardship is about our time, talents, our assets as well as our money. Shouldn't we offer from all that God has entrusted to us?

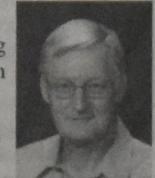
Stewardly tip

Another way to Re-cycle/Re-use: Sell or buy for nothing. Visit www.freecycle.org and find your nearest town or city, register yourself, and then post anything that you own that you want to get rid of but is still useable. Your castaway may be useful for someone else.

Readers: Share your Stewardly tips so that we all can make better use of the resources God has entrusted to us. Submit your suggestion and your contact information so that we can acknowledge your contribution or ask for more details.

Next issue: "Budgeting
Rule 1: Spend Less Than
You Earn"

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Spirituality

Getting Unstuck

Arlene Van Hove

It certainly is my experience in working within the church community, that many of us fight tooth and nail to avoid finding out who we are....

Scott Spencer-Wolff

I am becoming more and more interested in the relationship between psychological and spiritual development especially now that the world is a hotbed for religious extremists. And so, I have been asking fellow Christians for a definition of the word "spirituality." Most people frown when I ask the question. Sometimes I return the frown and wonder if there is a problem with my question? My assumption is they are puzzled because they think I should know the answer. However, most people, once they begin to think about it, struggle to define the term "spirituality."

So far, some of the definitions I have gathered are: "virtue," "the relationship between God and man," "that which deals with faith," "it is about what we believe," "it has to do with religion" and "it is about our soul." I wonder if these are the definitions pastors work with when they use this word in their sermons.

Spiritual bypassing

I have written on the relationship between spiritual and psychological development before. At the same time, it seems we continue to have a lack of understanding in this area.

For instance, a gentleman recently approached me because I am a therapist and I am a Christian. He wanted me to pray for him so that he could be released from his drug and alcohol addiction. He shared that he had heard he could be healed through the power of prayer. Another person recently related she became a Christian because she thought her problems would be solved when she "accepted Christ in her heart." A little later someone confided that at a couple's retreat they were encouraged to write their sins on a piece of paper which they burned to symbolize their healing because "Christ died on the cross for them." And so, the list goes on – a seemingly "quick" "spiritual" fix to various life challenges.

Unfortunately, the above "solutions" are symptoms of "spiritual bypassing" which is the tendency to turn away from what is difficult or unpleasant and cling to something that is safe and comforting. Among Christians (as well as adherents of other faiths) there is a widespread tendency to bypass or avoid dealing with personal or emotional "unfinished business" all the while imploring God (or other spiritual entities) to help us live more effective lives. This spiritual bypassing is tempting for all of us when we are having difficulty navigating life's spiritual, developmental and

situational challenges. We know our hope lies in God, at the same time this does not release us from taking responsibility for seeking healing and health in terms of working through life's issues.

Spiritual identity vs. soul fitness

How often, while still struggling to get to know ourselves, are we encouraged to give ourselves up? I cannot help but wonder how does one "lose oneself" if one hasn't actually "found oneself." As a result, we wind up using spiritual practices to create a new spiritual identity, which is actually an old dysfunctional identity based on avoidance of unresolved psychological issues – repackaged in a new guise. And so we create spiritual extremists that become a danger to themselves as well as others because they interpret their experiences only in a spiritual sense rather than understanding that life is lived on many levels.

To have a basic understanding of the term "spirituality" it is helpful to go back to the Hebrew scriptures in which the word "spirit" means "breath" or, as some theorists would say "life force." This makes sense to me. Our spirituality has to do with our "aliveness," our "life force or energy." The most helpful definition of spirituality I have come across (and have written about before) is that *it is a way of being...it is the life-long process of discovering who I am and what it means to live life fully. It is the quest for meaning and the desire to live an authentic (real) life where the inner world (meaning, values) integrates with the outer world (words, action).* So, if healthy spirituality is the goal then religion is the path. For us, as Christians our "spirituality" is about our relationship to ourselves, to our neighbors, to God and to his creation. This is our framework for our spiritual and psychological development. The word I use for the interrelatedness of the two is "soul fitness."

Like physical fitness, soul fitness is not something one develops on the spur-of-the-moment. It is gradually a way of becoming as we challenge ourselves to tackle our spiritual, developmental and situational challenges in life as we go along and build upon the abilities developed from the stage before. The path may sound difficult, however, the sooner we stop hiding from ourselves the more we will be able to deal effectively with our own as well as the world's problems. (More about that next month.)

Arlene Van Hove is now on sabbatical from Cascade Christian Counselling Association in Surrey B.C.



... Church cont. from p. 13

not have a favorable sound. Proselytism was for a long time identical with "propaganda for one's own church," "trying to win more members," and "winning of souls." Sometimes questionable practices were involved.

The search for more members often tended to become worldly. There was growing dissatisfaction with this kind of "promoting one's own church." We noticed this not only in the Roman Catholic Church but also in the World Council of Churches, which on the one hand condemned proselytism but on the other hand declared, "No church has to conceal the affirmation of their own faith commitment." But no church should be allowed to seek its own glory or try to change other churches to conform to its structures. This would obscure the essence of the church.

The misunderstanding that the church in showing the

way of life still seeks its own glory and celebrates her own structure can be overcome only by what it makes evident in its word and deed. The identity of the church can only lie in following and obeying the gospel of the Lord of the church. The churches don't have to promote their own particular characteristics, which are historically or psychologically and sociologically founded. What makes them legitimate can only be truly listening to the voice of their Lord. This happens insofar as churches find their own identity only in manifesting a love that is sensitive and has a clear insight into what is most important – following the Lord.

This is part of a series in which Rev. Kooistra is guiding us in rereading G. C. Berkouwer's Dogmatic Studies. These reflections are based on De Kerk, Deel 1, Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1970.



Church of the Resurrection, St. Petersburg

VAN DER GALIEN PHOTO

... Cathedrals cont. from p. 15

St. Isaac's Cathedral, designed by the French architect Montferrand, is the largest church in the city with a capacity of 12,000 standing worshipers. It is 102 metres high, faced with marble and crowned with a giant dome. Approximately 220 pounds of precious metal (gold flake) were used in gilding its magnificent dome. Started in 1818, the cathedral took 40 years to build. The interior is awesome. It is embellished with 150 pictures and ceiling paintings, which are masterpieces of Russian monumental art. What's so amazing is that many of those beautiful paintings are up in the very high ceiling. It took 16 years to decorate the interior.

There is very little traffic on the streets on Sunday. We had our pictures taken standing in St. Isaac's Square with St. Isaac's Cathedral in the background. The compositional and spiritual focus of the huge square is the Cathedral, which is named in honor of St. Isaac of Dalmatia.

The Kazan Cathedral glistens at a height of 64 metres. This huge cathedral was built in the early 1800's.

But nothing compares to the nine-domed Cathedral of the Resurrection, which is 81 metres high. It was put up on the bank of the Griboyedov Canal – on the site where 63-year-old Emperor Alexander II was mortally wounded by a terrorist who exploded a hand-made bomb. This very unique cathedral is commonly known as "Our Savior-on-the-Spilt-Blood". It's the most beautiful stone building I have ever seen.

The 24 years of construction work (1883-1907) resulted in the creation of a masterpiece of architecture. We toured the famous structure on a Saturday afternoon and were able to witness a wedding taking place inside the cathedral. The groom was dressed in a black suit; the bride was in white. People took an incense stick as they entered the cathedral, lit it in a candle and then put the burning stick in a pot or holder.

The Russian Orthodox priests with their long beards and long robes look like they are from another century.

Another interesting old church we visited was a Lutheran Church in Finland. The pews have little doors on each side of the pews. I sat in the back pew to get a feel of what the church was like during worship services.

I'll always cherish the memories and the photos I have of those magnificent cathedrals.

Have a Blessed Good Friday and Easter Sunday!

Maynard van der Galien is a farmer and owns and operates the Old Towne Hall Restaurant and Tea Room in Renfrew, Ont.



Opinion

"Peak oil" and the oil wars

We are at war. No official declaration, of course. Nevertheless war it is. This is no ordinary war – a conflict with triumphant armies and a foreseeable expiry date. No, this world war is quite different. For one thing it will last indefinitely. That means forever.

What am I talking about? What sort of nonsense am I spouting this time? I am referring to the global war for oil.

Dave O'Reilly, chairman and chief executive of the second largest US oil and gas group, ChrevonTexaco, recently said that "The time when we could count on cheap oil and even cheaper natural gas is clearly ending." Mr. O'Reilly did mention the scary word 'war,' although in the more friendly sense of 'bidding war.'

This, so far friendly war, is nevertheless a conflict of life and death and waged between the big global economic blocks: a loose alliance of China-Russia, the triad of USA-Japan-Taiwan, and the United States of Europe, all three after 'The Big Prize,' the Middle East.

It will become hotter as we approach that fateful moment: peak oil, signaling the end of ever increasing supply and the beginning of forever declining production. No oil. No food. We starve. That's the 'terror' we face.

Prior to 1973 energy supply was controlled by OPEC, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries. When they briefly stopped that flow during the 1973 Yom Kippur War, the world in panic explored and found temporary relief in the North Sea, Alaska and Prudhoe Bay. These fields – the only ones discovered – are now past their peak.

So OPEC is back on the throne, holding all the trump cards in a region that's a true powder keg, its masses assailed by enemies from without, its population pressed by religious and democratic forces from within. Whoever gains access to this, the world's last oil, wins this war.

A report

Here is a progress report. I could call it a War Bulletin. China is one of the main players. So is India, which also has a ravenous thirst for the black gold. These two most populous nations, with 37 percent of the world's people, are bidding up energy prices and racing against each other and against global en-

ergy companies in an increasingly ferocious grab for that ever more precious energy. Both are rushing to catch up with Europe and Japan and, of course, the USA.

China is already the world's second-largest energy consumer, trailing only the United States. India has moved into fourth place, behind Russia, after overtaking Japan in 2001.

Last year China's oil consumption leaped by 40 percent, to 6.5 million barrels a day. U.S. domestic demand is 21 million barrels a day, and while U.S. thirst is increasing by about 500,000 barrels per day per year, China's is jumping three times as much, to 1.5 million barrels. No wonder that, since the U.S. and China are more and more dependent on imported oil, both are frantically devising ways to maintain uninterrupted access.

So who is winning so far? So far China's strategy is more farsighted and coherent. While the USA spent \$300 billion to invade Iraq – with dubious results, has tried to overthrow the Chavez government in Venezuela – which back-fired, and now threatens Iran, China has entered through the back door and made long-term contracts with many of these countries, investing about \$15 billion in foreign oil fields and expecting to invest ten times that amount in the next decade. China also has begun to negotiate directly with America's largest long-time oil suppliers to lock up future deliveries. We, in Canada, are currently the largest supplier for the USA. Virtually all Canadian oil pipelines go south to satisfy the needs of a thirsty U.S. Midwest. That may soon change. Chinese and Canadian companies are negotiating to build a pipeline from northern Alberta west to British Columbia.

In December, China signed a deal with Venezuela and neighboring Colombia to construct a pipeline linking Venezuelan oil fields to ports along Colombia's Pacific coast, allowing China to bypass the U.S.-dominated Panama Canal. Venezuela is America's fourth biggest supplier of oil. China recently signed a 25-year oil and gas deal with Iran. Currently, about 80 percent of China's oil imports pass through the Straits of Malacca. China views that sea corridor as under U.S. Navy control. It is investigating the construction of a canal across the Isthmus of Kra in southern Thailand that would allow

it to bypass the Straits.

Never a dull moment

Early March I had a two-day meeting in Toronto, part of a committee to choose two new fund managers from seven different presentations. Quite interesting to hear these experts extol the virtues of their investment strategies.

What did I learn? I learned that these smart people go strictly by past performance – which was quite good. However they don't want to make any guesses about the future, because that's tricky and can come back to haunt them.

I have no such qualms. But then, my job isn't at stake when I am wrong, just my personal portfolio. So these well-educated and well-off people, well-versed in the ins and outs of finance and the stock market, generally tout continuous capital growth: the prosperous past is the present and is the future too.

When I expressed my doubts, I was politely called a pessimist. What am I? Just a stubborn Dutchman, unable to perceive other peoples' point of view? Why don't I too preach the party line of affluence forever?

There are a couple of reasons. My history goes back to living through a depression and experiencing a war at close hand. Also, I am a bit of a missionary, trying to convert the world to a more sustainable and environmentally friendly existence, because I love our biosphere, our natural surroundings, with my fellow humans, our animals, all living matter. Your and my welfare depend on it.

It's my considerate opinion that we, in the next few years, are in for some nasty surprises. Do I want to bet on this? I am no betting man. Never bought a lottery ticket in my life and never will. Yet, I would wager that I am correct in this. What makes me so sure?

Peak oil

For one thing, the behavior of the big oil companies. They just refuse to build new infrastructure, even though their entire oil processing system is running full-out: all their refineries, pipelines and tankers, drilling rigs, everything needed to transport and make crude into useable products, are running at 100 percent capacity.

Why do these oil companies, while raking in billions in profit, buy up their own shares and

Mainly on Oil

Bert Hielema

distribute high dividends? Why don't they use their abundant cash reserves to build extra capacity and so make even more money?

Reserves

The reason is simple: it's simply bad business. They don't expect to find sufficient reserves. They don't see the need for new equipment, because they believe that there ain't no more gigantic oil fields out there. It's their expert opinion that it's a waste of money to expand. Why invest billions of dollars when in the future there will be less and less oil available? Would you add extra rooms to your house, if you knew that soon the kids would leave? The same holds true for Exxon and Shell and BP. With less and less oil coming on stream, they do with what they have, even though it causes bottlenecks now.

These oil companies know the score. They know that the spare oil in the Middle East is gone. It used to be that, as soon as there was a shortage, Saudi Arabia would open the tap and out would spout the extra oil needed. According to an expert I trust, Simmons & Co, with \$40 billion invested in the oil industry, OPEC produced 28.03 million barrels per day (mbd) in 1998 and last year, 2004, it produced 29.19 mbd, virtually no increase. In other words the cushion is gone.

If demand grows at the same rate as in 2004, the world this year will use 85.2 mbd, an increase of 2.8 mbd. According to Mr Simmons, more key producers are declining than growing. The non OPEC people produced a bit over 50 mbd in 2004. Of these, 44 percent are declining, 16 percent are increasing and 40 percent are

questionable, among which is Canada with 6.2 percent.

Then there is rising demand. Annually we squeeze 18-20 million new cars into our already crowded highways, while miles per car traveled is still growing. Higher standards of living and increasing globalization require ever more energy everywhere. So it's only a matter of time that the world approaches that peak oil moment. This year? Next?

From my experience last week with these money experts, most economists think the issue of "the world approaching peak oil" is nonsense. However, the facts speak a different language as competition for oil gets more fierce every day.

Peak oil is as serious as a thermo-nuclear war, as dangerous as a sudden arrival of global warming. It signals the end of global prosperity.

We are sleepwalking into the future. When global peak oil pops up, it will change everything about the way we live, will challenge all of our assumptions, will compel us to do all things differently whether we like it or not.

Wrote Dr. Robert L. Hirsch, in a report to the US Department of Energy last month: "World oil peaking represents a problem like none other. The political, economic, and social stakes are enormous. Prudent risk management demands urgent attention and early action."



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and other
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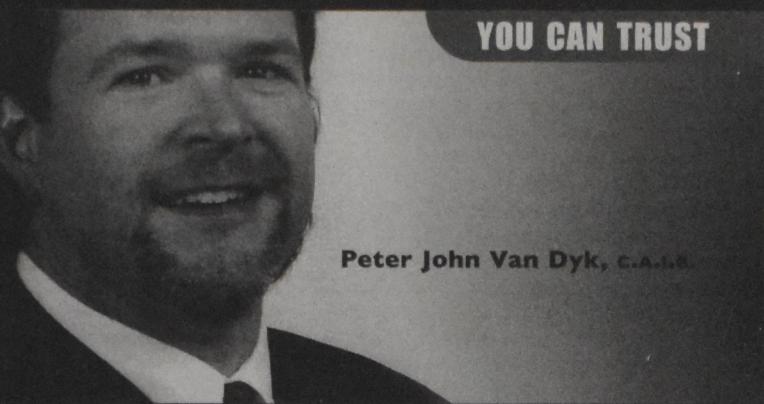
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This is the last year of the printed sermons.

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Prince George - CIRX	7:00 am	94.3
Princeton - CHOR	8:00 am	1400
Smithers - CFBV	9:15 am	1230
Summerland - CHOR	8:00 am	1450
Vernon - CJIB	9:30 pm	94

ALBERTA

Brooks - CIBQ	8:30 am	1340
Ft. McMurray - CJOK	8:30 am	1230
High River - CHRB	6:30 pm	1140
Edmonton - CJCA	6:00 pm	930
Westlock - CFOK	7:30 am	1370

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Weyburn - CFSL	8:00 am	1190

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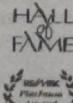
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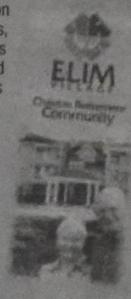
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Anniversaries

With thanksgiving to God, we announce the **50th Wedding Anniversary** of our parents

HENRY AND JILL VANDERVELDE

on March 30, 2005.

Love and best wishes from your children and grandchildren.

An **Open House** will be held from 2:00 - 4:00 pm on Saturday, April 2, 2005 at Maranatha CRC, 33 King St., York.

Correspondence:
9620 Haldibrook Rd
Caledonia ON N3W 2G9

Apeldoorn 1955 April 6 2005 Moorefield
The Netherlands Ontario
We are praising and thanking the Lord for his faithfulness. We hope to celebrate D.V. the **50th Wedding Anniversary** of our parents and grandparents

GEORGE AND ELEANOR MUNNIK

We pray that the Lord will continue to bless them with many more enjoyable years together.

Congratulations with love from all of us.

Irma & John Devries

Sarah & Wayne Sutherland, Joyce, Brian, Teresa
Freda & Len Schellingerhout
Bradley, David, Christopher, Amanda
Eric & Cecilia Munnik
Roland & Holly Munnik
Brandon, Kayla, Catrina, Michael

Open House from 2:00-4:00 p.m. on Saturday, April 9, 2005 at the Missionary Church, 550 Prospect St. Palmerston
Home address: RR#2 Moorefield ON N0G 2K0

Hamilton April 1 Brantford
1955 2005

With grateful thanks to our Lord we look forward to celebrating the **50th Anniversary** of our parents and grandparents

GERRY AND RIET VAN EYK
(nee Leutscher)

We pray that God will give them many more years together.
Sylvia & William van Wyngaarden
Bethany, Mallory
Elaine & Dirk van Wyngaarden
Adam, Lucas, Karen
Peter Van Eyk

Address: 35 Avondale St.
Brantford ON N3S 4L7

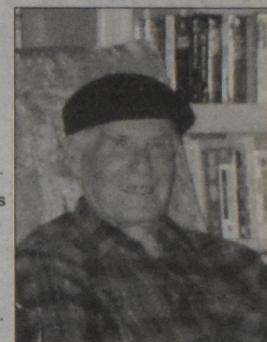
Obituaries

ARIE EDELMAN

When the congregation of Hope Community Church in Surrey, BC arrived for their worship service Sunday they noticed that a special chair, exclusively reserved for the comfort of the eldest member of their congregation, 92-year-old Arie Edelman, had been moved from its accustomed place and put under the cross.

On February 19, 2005 Arie Edelman joined his wife Catharina Maria (Marie) Krujft in Heaven.

A memorial service celebrating his life was held at the Willoughby Community Church in Langley, BC on February 25, 2005, pastors Sid VanderWoud and Alex Warneke officiating. Arie is buried with his wife in Langley Lawn Cemetery.



Right to the end Dad's positive attitude, steadfast faith, and exuberant testimony were an inspiration to all who came into contact with him. He is leaving a hole in our lives, but we rejoice that he has gone home to be with The Lord.

Correspondence: Maria Edelman, 820-165 Ontario St, St.Catharines ON L2R 5K4



In the Christian Reformed Church, Tweedsmuir Ave, Chatham, Ontario,

AUDREY WIELHOUWER AND CORNELIUS DEVOOGD committed their lives to each other.

March 31, 2005 signifies **50 years of marriage** and they together with their children praise God from whom all blessings flow.

John & Marina Zegarra deVoogd – Eden, Leah, Jared, Juan Daniel
Stan & Kitty Billingham deVoogd – Andrew, Nicolas, Tatiana, Kristen
Pete & Audrey deVoogd Spoelstra – Philip, Aleida, Erin, L.Carly
look forward to celebrating their anniversary this summer.

"I could have no greater joy than to know that my children live in the Truth." 3 John :4

Correspondence address: Cees & Audrey deVoogd, 39 St. Anthony St, Chatham ON N7M 3X9

Ruinerwold Dr. 1950

March 24

Drayton, Ont. 2005

BEN & JENNY KRAL (VanDyk)

We give thanks to God for the many blessings he has given to our parents in their **55 years of Marriage**.

With love from your children:

Theresa & Jack VanderLaan, Burlington ON
Sharon & Gene DeJong, Grand Rapids MI
Ed & Jeanette Kraal, Drayton ON
Yvonne & John Deen, Drayton ON
Rob & Shar Kraal, San Carlos CA
and their 18 grandchildren

Home address:
65 Dales Dr
Drayton ON N0G 1P0

Thank You



We wish to express our heartfelt thanks for the love and comfort you expressed to us through prayer, calls and cards with the recent passing of our dear mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, and great-great-grandmother.

We thank the Lord for the great care she received from the nursing staff at Shalom.

The Rumph Family

Correspondence:
Henry Rumph
275 Main St E #220
Grimsby ON L3M 5N8

June 27, 1923, Nieuw Buinen, Drenthe

Jan. 31, 2005, Aylmer, Ontario

HENDRIK (Henry) SCHIPPER

Husband of Alice who died in 1992.

Early on the morning of January 31, 2005, after a sudden heart attack, Henry was taken to his heavenly home. He lived a full life, with his younger years being spent in Holland, a 20-year span in Castrolanda, Brazil and the remainder of his life in Canada. As children, grandchildren and remaining family in the Netherlands we miss him and cherish rich and fond memories of his life and times with us.

Harry & Grace Schipper – Erica, Laura, Darryl, Anita, Eden ON
James Schipper, London, ON

Hilda & Bill VanderKlippe – Nathan, Stephen & Maria, Lisa, Alydia, Smithville ON
Rudolph & Sharon Schipper – Derek, Alicia, Randy, Emilee, Leslie, Destiny, Aylmer ON
Gerald & Grace Schipper – Henri, Marend, Gerard, Alyssa, Aylmer ON
Andy Schipper, Toronto ON

In the Netherlands: Tinie Haan, Bedum, Groningen
Geert & Iet Schipper, Emmen, Drenthe
Gina Dam, Assen, Drenthe
Hayo & Reina Schipper, Nieuw Buinen, Drenthe

Classifieds**Obituaries**

We express our deep sorrow in the sudden passing on into God's glory of our dear friend and executive director of our organization

FRED VANDERVELDE

His tireless and enthusiastic work for thirty years for the advancement of God's Kingdom by raising funds for the development of Christian textbooks will be forever etched in our memory of Fred. These textbooks are used in nearly all Christian schools continent wide.

We trust the Lord will comfort Audrey and her family in this time of sorrow.

On behalf of present and previous directors of the
Canadian Christian Education Foundation
Jenno Eelkema - President

April 8, 1937 November 21, 2005
Lioessens, Friesland Burlington, Ont.
For this God is our God forever and ever.
He will be our guide even unto death.
Psalm 48 :14

FRED (Frederick) VANDERVELDE

suddenly went to be with his Lord on Monday February 21, 2005 at the age of 67 years.

Beloved and devoted husband of Audrey and dear father of Ed & Pauline, Lucinda & Doug Sluys, Doug & Tina and Anna & Paul Vos.

Loved Pake of 13 grandchildren.

Fred was loved deeply and will be sadly missed by all. He will be remembered for his love and dedication toward the cause of Christian education and his many years of work with the Canadian Christian Education Foundation Inc. A celebration of his life was held at the Calvin Christian Reformed Church on Thursday, November 24, 2005 at 2:00 p.m. with Rev. John D. Hellinga and Rev. Paul Vandenberg officiating.

Correspondence: Mrs. Audrey vander Velde
2621 Cavendish Dr, Burlington ON L7P 3W6

Suddenly, the Lord took unto himself our beloved friend and brother-in-law

FREDERICK R. "Fred" VANDER VELDE

at the age of 67 years.

Beloved husband of Audrey, father of 4 married children, and 13 grandchildren. We pray that God will continually comfort Audrey and the family.

*The Lord is my rock,
my fortress and my deliverer;
my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge.*
Psalm 18:2

Sadly missed by:

Herman (deceased) & Trix Haringa, Whitby, Ont. Anneke & Wiebe Bakker, Leeuwarden, The Neth. Beddy & Arie De Boom, Leersum, The Neth. Hennie & Barend Bonvanie, Woodstock, Ont. and nephews and nieces.

Correspondence: Mrs. A. Vander Velde
2621 Cavendish Dr, Burlington ON L7P 3W6

FOLKERT RUDOLPH (Fred) VANDER VELDE

With sadness, on Monday, February 21, 2005, our brother, brother-in-law and uncle, Fred was suddenly taken from us. We rest in the assurance that he is now with his Lord.

Left to mourn his departure are:

Jellje Turkstra, Pieter Vander Velde, John Bremer, Rudy & Bert Van Holst, Maaike & John Vander Hout, Annie Vander Velde, Hilda Vander Velde, Ebby & Peter Van Dyk, Tieteke & Gerry De Graaf, plus numerous nieces and nephews.

Predeceased by his Dad, Ebel Vander Velde, Mother Antje Vander Velde, brother John and sister Tine Bremer and brother-in-law Jack Turkstra.

It is our prayer that God gives his wife Audrey and their children and grandchildren much strength for the days ahead.

AAGJE FRANS (nee Goet)
went to be with her Lord on February 18, 2005 at the age of 92.

She is survived by her beloved husband, Jacob, of 64 years and 11 children: Nick (Dini), Casey (Sharon), Peter (Cathy), Teo (Ena), Nina (Jake), Ron (Linda), Jake (Hetty), Betty (Albert), Richard, John (Norma Jean), and MaryAnn (Bill), along with 37 grandchildren and 31 great-grandchildren.

She was predeceased by a daughter, Elizabeth (Elsje), and a great-grandson, River.

Correspondence: Jacob Frans
111-1128 Vansickle Rd
St Catharines ON
L2S 2W3

For Sale

Due to circumstances, we are selling a unit in Phase 2 of **Wellingstone Christian Homes** in Hamilton. Ruby model. Possession expected at the beginning of June. Please call (905) 389-1679 after 6 pm for information.

The Ruby has 894 square feet of space consisting of kitchen, living room, master bedroom with a walk-in closet and a second bedroom with a smaller closet. The Ruby also has a balcony/patio and a storage area.

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Lisse, N.H. 1921 Frankford, Ont. 2005
On February 16 the Lord called home his child

ANNE EIGENBROOD (Van Tol)

beloved wife of Henk Eigenbrood
Dear Mom, Oma, and Grand-Oma of Coby & Andre Suurd
Janette, Shirley Suurd & Craig Maw, Jonathan, Maurice, Crystal, Linda Dick & Lucy
Angela & Kevin De Boer and Lucas, Ruth, Kevin, Kimberly and David Martin & Fran
Frank, Jeremy
Henry & Cindy
Joshua, Timothy

Funeral Service was held in the Community Christian Ref. Church, Frankford, Ont. Rev. Michael Bootsma officiated.

Correspondence: Henk Eigenbrood, RR #1 Frankford ON K0K 2C0

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For information please contact

Lenie VanGinkel

1505 - 35 Kingknull Dr

Brampton ON L6Y 5G5

Tel 905 - 796 - 3196 or cvanginkel@sympatico.ca

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For more information, job description and vision statement, please contact:
Pete Minnesma
82 Eldorado Avenue
London ON N5W 1S5

or pminnesma@hotmail.com. Application deadline is April 15, 2005.

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rklassen@mutualsupport.net www.mutualsupport.net

See page 22 for other job opportunities and TEACHER ADS



Job Opportunities



Christian Labour Association of Canada

The Edmonton CLAC office is in need of a full time Solidarity Local Coordinator. This person will be working with the boards and members of our Alberta solidarity locals and developing student local(s). The successful applicant will also be working with local communities, MLAs, and community newspapers.

CLAC solidarity locals are made up of members of the Christian community who support the vision of CLAC, wish to work with others who share the vision, and help those in the developing world through the work of emerging Christian trade unions.

The individual must possess good public relations skills, be able to articulate CLAC's vision, and have good organizational skills. We are looking for someone who is willing to commit five years to this effort.

For a job description and expectation criteria or to submit a resume, contact Co Vanderlaan at (780) 454-6181 or fax at (780)451-3976 or email at cavanderlaan@clac.ca.

Excellent benefit package; wages commensurate with experience.



Toronto District Christian High School

Teachers needed for: Business Math
Math

Send resume and references to
principal@tdchristian.ca or to 377
Woodbridge Ave, Woodbridge ON L4L 2V7

For more information please check the jobs page on our web site www.tdchristian.ca

THE IMMANUEL CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

an inter-denominational school system of over 700 students in Lethbridge, Alberta invites applications for the 2005/2006 school year for the following teaching positions.

- Elementary Positions
- Band/Choir (Gr. 5-12)

Please send a letter of application, resume & statement of faith to:

Mr. Henry Ronda, Principal
Immanuel Christian Elementary School
2010 - 5 Avenue North, Lethbridge Alberta T1H 0N5
Phone: (403) 317-7860 Fax: (403) 317-7862
Email: henry.ronda@christianed.ca

or
Mr. Ed DeYoung, Principal
Immanuel Christian High School
802 - 6 Avenue North,
Lethbridge Alberta T1H 0S1
Phone: (403) 328-4783 Fax: (403) 327-6333
Email: ed.deyoung@christianed.ca

MARANATHA CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

Windsor, Ontario
is diversifying its High School program in September 2005

Secondary Division

Dynamic teachers interested in a growing interdenominational school are invited to apply for positions in: Canadian and World Studies, Mathematics, Technological Design, Visual Arts and French (see below)

Elementary Division

We invite applications for:

Resource (50%), French (100% combined with French at the Secondary).

Positions may be combined

Send applications and complete resume to:

William Van Dyke, Principal
939 Northwood Street,
Windsor ON N9E 2B4
Information: 519-966-7424
fax: 519-966-9519

Teaching Position: Be part of a staff that is committed to Christ-centred education in action! We have an opening for a full-time **grades 6/7 teacher** with strength in all elementary subject areas but with particular confidence in math and science. Join our team and help build positive experiences. Please forward a resume and statement of faith to:

Ymko Boersma, Principal
John Knox Christian School,
4738 Confederation Line,
Wyoming Ontario N0N 1T0
Phone: 519 845 3112 Fax: 519 845 1404
email: info@wyomingjkcs.com

WOODLAND CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL invites applications for two teaching positions for the 2005-2006 school year. Teachers who are qualified to teach a combination from the following are encouraged to apply.

Mathematics
Science (Biology)
Bible
French
Choral Music

Please address inquiries to:

Gary VanArragon, Principal
Email: principal@woodland.on.ca

Information about Woodland Christian High School is available on our website at www.woodland.on.ca

OTTAWA CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

offers Christian education to 226 elementary school students from a diverse denominational background. We are accepting applications from qualified Christian teachers for a possible **part-time Junior/Intermediate** position. An ability to teach core French to Grades 5-8 is a prerequisite.

Interested applicants may forward their resumes and statements of faith to:

Mr. Paul Triemstra, Principal
Ottawa Christian School
2191 Benjamin Ave
Ottawa Ontario K2A 1P6
Tel: (613) 722-5836 Fax: (613) 722-5836
Email: paul@ocschool.org Web: www.ocschool.org

CHATHAM CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL

invites teachers, who demonstrate a passionate love for God and young people, to join our team beginning September, 2005. We are a growing school in a modern facility, supported by a strong Christian community. We seek applications for the 2005 - 2006 school year. Teachers with strengths in English, History and Math are needed.

Please address your letter of application and resume to:

John Van Pelt, Chatham Christian High School
475 Keil Dr South
Chatham ON N7M 6L8

E-mail: johnvanpelt@chathamchristian.ca
phone: 519-352-4980 fax: 519-352-4041

VERNON CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

is an interdenominational Christian School located in the beautiful Okanagan Valley. It is comprised of an Elementary Campus that opened in 1978 and a Middle High School campus that opened in January of 2004. Our High School program is expanding to include grade 12 in September of 2005. We are seeking visionary teachers with pioneering spirits who want to provide educational leadership to a vibrant and growing Christian School community.

We presently have need of one **full-time elementary teacher**, one 50 percent **Music Teacher** for the Elementary School as well as **part-time staff** in our Middle High School in the following areas: Learning Assistance, Languages, Fine Arts and TESL.

For further information about Vernon Christian School, visit our website at www.vcs.ca

Please forward resumes and requests for information to:

Larry Simpson, Principal
6890 Pleasant Valley Road
Vernon BC V1B 3R5
Fax at 250-545-0254 E-mail at lsimpson@vcs.ca

Central Alberta Christian High School

seeks a French and/or Spanish teacher. An ability to teach Music/band and Art would be very beneficial. This position is currently 53% time; however, a consideration for more time may be a possibility. Consider joining an encouraging society who, together with an excellent staff, work to provide an education rooted in the Reformed tradition to 130+ grade 10 -12 high school students. Applicants should preferably be graduates of a Christian college and/or have teaching experience in a Christian high school. Eligibility for an Alberta Teaching Certificate is required. Please send resumes to:

Jack Vanden Pol, Principal
Central Alberta Christian High School
22 Eagle Rd. Lacombe AB T4L 1G7
Ph: 403-782-4535 Fax: 403-782-5425
E-mail - cach@telusplanet.net www.cachs.ca

TRENTON CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Invites applications for qualified teachers to fill potential openings in our Kindergarten, Junior and Intermediate levels beginning Sept. 1, 2005. Strengths in Music, Phys. Ed and French will be an asset.

All qualified applications welcome. Please send letters of application, resumes, inquiries, etc. before April 8 to:

TRENTON CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
340 Second Dug Hill Rd RR #4
Trenton ON K8V 5P7
(Phone) 613-392-3600 (Fax) 613-392-6316
Email: tcs@reach.net

Events/Advertising

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- March 18** - 7:30 pm Concert Chris Teeuwsen, organ & Daniel Warren, trumpet. Hebron CRC, **Whitby**. Ad. \$10.00
- March 18, 19** The Woodstock Dutch Theatre Group presents "DE RUIGE RITSELAARS" Een Klucht in 4 bedrijven door Hub Fober. **Woodstock**, Market Centre Theatre: Fri. at 8 pm & Sat. at 2pm and 8pm. See ad.
- March 20** 3:00 pm: Jonathan Oldengarm performs in the Distinguished Organists in Recital series at First United Church, King and William Streets, **Waterloo**, Ontario. The series celebrates the relocation and refurbishment of the 1971 Gabriel Kney organ formerly located in London's Aeolian Hall. ADMISSION: \$20.00. For tickets, call the church office at 519-745-8487, or 578-4006 after 5 p.m.
- March 20 - Dutch Service in Ancaster** Christian Ref. Church at 3:00 pm. Rev. John Drost will be preaching.
- March 27** - 7:30 p.m. **Dutch Easter Song Service** Emmanuel Ref. Church, 170 Clarke St, Woodstock. Rev. Case Koolhaas will be leading the service. Babysitting. Refreshments served after service.
- April 8** - Beginnings Counselling & Adoption Services of Ontario holds its 20th Anniversary Celebration Dinner. Hamilton District Chr. High School, 6:00 p.m. punch, 6:45 p.m. dinner, free will offering. Call 905-528-6665 by April 1st to make your reservation. See www.beginnings.ca for details.
- April 8** The Woodstock Dutch Theatre Group presents "DE RUIGE RITSELAARS", Een Klucht in 4 bedrijven door Hub Fober, at the Christian Heritage School, **Jordan** at 8 p.m. See ad for ticket information.
- April 9** Concert of Sacred Music by St. Thomas Crescendo Male Choir 7:30 p.m. **Bethel CRC**, 716 Clasic Drive, **London** (Freewill offering) Info: (519) 637-4357
- April 9** Ambassadors Christian Male Chorus, **Ancaster CRC**. For more information call 905-389-2104 or 905-689-5266 or 905-714-0126. Visit us at www.ambassadorschoir.ca
- April 15** Ambassadors Christian Male Chorus, Zion United Reformed Church 1238 Old Hwy 8, **Sheffield**. For information, call 905-389-2104 or 905-689-5266 or 905-714-0126. Visit us at www.ambassadorschoir.ca
- April 22** Ambassadors Christian Male Chorus, Covenant CRC, **St. Catharines**. See ad.
- April 23** Ambassadors Christian Male Chorus, Ebenezer CRC, **Jarvis**. See ad.
- May 1** Concert of Sacred Music by St. Thomas Crescendo Male Choir 7:30 p.m. **Knox Presbyterian Church**, 55 Hincks Street, **St. Thomas** (Freewill offering) Info: (519) 637-4357
- May 7** Liberation Choir 60th Anniversary Concert, with the Guelph Symphony Orchestra, 7:30 at **Hamilton Place**. Tickets: \$20, \$30, \$40. Available from choir members/ box office/ www.organs.ca
- June 24-26** Christian Reformed Church of **Kentville, Nova Scotia** will be celebrating its 50th Anniversary. For more details contact Gerrit Tenyenhuis, ph. 1-902-678-7641 or gtenyenhuis@ns.sympatico.ca or the church at 1-902-678-6293 or fax 1-902-679-5230. Email: kentvillecrc@ns.sympatico.ca
- July 1-3** Nobleford CRC 100 year anniversary celebrations with picnic, banquet and services. For more information contact Bert/Pat Konynenbelt at (403)824-3442 or by e-mail at bpkbelt@telus.net
- July 8-10** Charlottetown Christian Ref. Church will be celebrating 50 years of ministry. For more information, contact the church office at **902-894-4721** or email: chtowncrc@pei.aibn.com.



CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH OF KENTVILLE, NOVA SCOTIA

will be celebrating its **50th Anniversary, June 24-26, 2005**. We start the celebration on Friday **June 24** at 5:30 p.m. at St Joseph's RC Church's multi-purpose room, 43 Belcher Street, Kentville N.S. Come join us for an evening of praise and lots of fellowship and reminiscing, with potluck supper, followed by a program commemorating God's faithfulness.

On Saturday **June 25**, Open House between 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. at our own facilities – Kentville CRC, 118 Oakdene Ave. Kentville, N.S. Displays, information tables, and much more including lunch.

On Sunday, **June 26** come join us for a special celebration service at 10:00 a.m. We extend an invitation to all former members and friends of our congregation to join us in celebrating God's faithfulness over the last 50 years.

For more details please contact Gerrit Tenyenhuis, phone 1-902-678-7641 or gtenyenhuis@ns.sympatico.ca Or the church at 1-902-678-6293 or fax 1-902-679-5230. Email: kentvillecrc@ns.sympatico.ca

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You are invited to an inspiring concert of praise, prayers and spirituals as the Ambassadors get ready for their third liberation tour of Holland with director Harold de Haan, Laura Pin, piano and Michael Pin, clarinet.

Ancaster Christian Reformed Church
70 Garner Rd E (Hwy 53)
Saturday, April 9, 2005

Zion United Reformed Church
1238 Old Hwy 8, Sheffield
Friday April 15, 2005

Covenant Christian Ref. Church
278 Parnell Rd, St. Catharines
Friday, April 22, 2005

Ebenezer Christian Reformed Church, Jarvis
Sponsored by:
Parkview Meadows Retirement Village
Saturday, April 23, 2005

All concerts start at 8PM.
Tickets: \$15.00 Family \$40.00

For reserve tickets or more information call:
905-389-2104 or 905-689-5266 or 905-714-0126
Visit us at www.ambassadorschoir.ca

'The Sweetest Spring!' -remembering APRIL - MAY 1945

On July 1-3, 2005

THE NOBLEFORD CRC

invites all former members and interested persons to join us in celebrating 100 years of God's faithfulness.

A combined **picnic** with the Granum CRC is scheduled for July 1 at Park Lake with many planned activities. On Saturday, there will be an historical tour of the area followed by an open house at the original church now located in Picture Butte. A **banquet** will be held at the Nobleford Community Complex on Saturday at 6:30 p.m. On Sunday, the morning **worship service** will be held at the Community Complex at 10:00 a.m. with **lunch** to follow. A second service is planned for 1:30 p.m. at Nobleford CRC.

Registration costs for the banquet will be \$25.00 per person on or before April 30, 2005 and is limited to persons ages 13 and over. After April 30 the cost will be \$30.00 per person. Camping is also available from June 30 - July 4 at Park Lake in the Reserved Group Areas at a cost of \$10 per night. There are a max. of 50 sites. Please forward your registrations for banquet and/or camping to Jackie Postman at Box 212, Nobleford AB T0L 1S0 and include the name(s) of those planning to attend the banquet and/or which nights you would like to reserve for camping. Make your cheque/money order payable to CRC of Nobleford Anniversary Fund. For more information contact Bert/Pat Konynenbelt at (403)824-3442 or by e-mail at bpkbelt@telus.net Also check out our website www.noblefordcrc.com



News

Look at Lebanon: Was George Bush right, after all?



Kemal Jumblatt, leader of Lebanon's Druze, meets with U.S. envoy Talcott Seelye. Jumblatt was killed soon afterward.

Harry der Nederlanden

Pictures of Lebanon have been much in the news in recent weeks. Large pro-democracy demonstrations, reminiscent of the Ukraine and of Romania several years ago, have caught the imagination of journalists and rekindle a hope for better things even among cynical onlookers in the West. It is being called the "Cedar Revolution," echoing the "Orange Revolution" of the Ukraine.

After the elections in Palestine and the encouraging steps toward compromise there, after the courage and determination shown by voters in Iraq, after the announcement by President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt favoring greater democracy there, after support for Lebanon's independence from the Saudis, commentaries are popping up in the most unlikely places with the title, "Was George Bush right?"

Peter Mansbridge, writing in *Maclean's* asks, "Is freedom really on the march across the Middle East?" And he invokes memories of the collapse of the Berlin Wall and a few years later the implosion of the entire Soviet empire. Are we seeing something similar happening in the Middle East? Mansbridge quotes Walid Jumblatt, a Lebaneze politician and a vociferous critic of U.S. policy, who now attributes the process of change to the U.S. invasion of Iraq.

One expects inflated talk about "The march of freedom" from hardcore Bush supporters like Charles Krauthammer, who wrote: "We are at the dawn of a glorious, delicate, revolutionary moment in the Middle East. It was triggered by the invasion of Iraq, the overthrow of Saddam, and televised images of eight million Iraqis voting in a free multiparty election." He points out that 140 Syrian intellectuals petitioned their own government to withdraw from Lebanon — and they dared to sign their names. That wouldn't have happened in Syria a couple of years ago, for dissidents there had a way of disappearing.

But even leading magazines in Europe, like Germany's *Der Spiegel*, which has been very critical about U.S. ambitions in the Middle East, raised the question, "Could Bush Be Right?"

The pro-Syria demonstrations orchestrated by Hezbollah, which is both an armed militant organization and a strong political party in Lebanon, brought a sobering reminder that democracy is not a panacea. Before Syria imposed itself on the country almost 30 years ago, dominating

its political life as well as much of its economic life, Lebanon devolved into a ruinous civil war.

For many years Lebanon had been perhaps the most open society in the Middle East, a meeting place between East and West. The country was hacked out of a larger Syria in 1943 when the latter came under France's mandate after World War I. It created a country about equally divided between Muslims and Maronite Christians. The latter, however, were more open to Western influence and hence ended up dominating in both government and business.

Many Arab leaders got their education in Lebanon at the American University in Beirut, founded in the 19th century by American missionaries, who sought to reach the Muslim world by establishing schools. Robert D. Kaplan's *The Arabists* relates some of this early history. Until well after World War II, he says, the Americans had good relations with the Arabs and many of the Arabists in the U.S. were in sympathy with Arab nationalism.

Depending where you begin the story, Lebanon's woes can be traced back to French colonialism, Jewish Zionism, which flooded the country with Palestinian refugees, Palestinian terrorism or Syrian aggression. The influx of Palestinian refugees into the country, especially after the 1973 war, launched by Egypt and Syria, led to a destabilization of the country. The Palestinian refugee camps, dominated by militants, became a country within a country. The Maronites tried to assert control over the Palestinians and quash the militants, who were inciting Israeli counter-strikes into Lebanon.

A messy 15-year civil war erupted, which was often described as a war between Muslims and Christians. But it was actually far more complicated, with several factions fighting one another. Syria sent in troops in 1977 (at the behest of the Maronite government). Israel invaded southern Lebanon to root out P.L.O. terrorists. The U.N. intervened, with the U.S. sending troops

under a U.N. mandate (241 American troops were killed by a car bomb in 1983). Until 2000, Syria occupied the northern part of the country and Israel the southern tip. Israel withdrew in 2000 and Syria agreed to withdraw as well, but it never did.

Syria ended up supporting the Shiites in Lebanon, even granting Lebanese citizenship to tens of thousands of Syrian Muslims, so that now Christians are a minority in the country. In recent years important positions have all gone to supporters of Syria, and Syria has exploited the economy of the country — initially much stronger than its own — to its advantage but with damage to the economy of Lebanon and its middle class. But Shiite Muslims have benefited from Syrian rule.

It is thus no surprise that Syria has strong supporters in the country as well as strong detractors. Self-rule and democracy for Lebanon do not necessarily add up to peace.

Marcus Gee of the *Globe and Mail* wrote: "It would be pleasing to think that all of this came about through spontaneous combus-

tion, a natural flaring of the human spirit. In fact, it has been made possible by the exercise of sheer American power."

He adds: "Instead of heeding the call of jihad or opting for Islamic theocracy, the people of Beirut and Ramallah and Baghdad are expressing their preference for accountable, law-based government. If Lebanese follow Iraqis and Palestinians and hold a free parliamentary election in May, it will be the third such vote this year in the Arab world — a remarkable series for a region that until now had been left behind by the rise of global democracy."

The Economist, however, raises a caution: "So is it on an unstoppable roll that will lead to peace and democracy across the region? Absolutely not — at any rate, not yet. The Middle East is still a dangerous mess. The despots are not becoming democrats overnight, and the Americans know it is risky to promote ideas that threaten the regimes of some of their closest yet far from democratic allies in the wider region, such as Pakistan, Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia."

60th Anniversary Concert

Celebrating the Liberation of Holland by the Canadians

Liberation Choir

Guelph Symphony Orchestra

Saturday May 7th, 2005

Hamilton Place

7:30 PM

Directors: Willem Van Suydam / Simon Irving

Tickets: \$20, \$30, \$40 Available From Choir Members / Box Office / www.organs.ca

Organizing: The Music Group Productions Incorporated

Liberation
Choir

Guelph
Symphony
Orchestra